



» **Past-Present Connectivities:
Can We Identify Recurring Social and/or
Environmental Patterns in the Past and Present?** «

In 1749, the Academy of Dijon organised an essay competition to which one Jean-Jacques Rousseau submitted the now famous winning essay. At a time when received dogmas were coming under increasing pressure, Rousseau wrote in the enlightened spirit of free, reflective, and critical inquiry.

In this spirit, the Reflective Turn Forum of the Excellence Cluster ROOTS at Kiel University, Germany, declares an international open essay competition on the following topic:

» Past-Present Connectivities: Can We Identify Recurring Social and/or Environmental Patterns in the Past and Present? «

Please submit your essay by **31 July 2022** (midnight GMT +1) by email to essay@roots.uni-kiel.de.

The text of the essay should be in English, anonymised for the purposes of a double-blind peer review, and not exceed 5000 words in

length (excluding bibliography).

In your email, please include your name and contact details.

Please submit your essay in the PDF format attached to your email.

The competition is open to contributions from all disciplines, provided they address the competition topic. For more information, see below.

Subject to a peer-review and an editorial process, selected contributions will be published in a joint volume edited by the organisers. In addition, the editors will identify three particularly stimulating contributions whose authors will be invited to contribute to the next International Open Workshop organised in Kiel in March 2023 (travel and accommodation paid by the organisers). The three selected contributors will also receive a prize money of 1000 Euro each.

Extended submission date: **31 July 2022** (midnight GMT +1) to essay@roots.uni-kiel.de

The Cluster of Excellence ROOTS explores the roots of social, environmental, and cultural phenomena and processes that substantially marked past human development. In a broad interdisciplinary conceptual framework, archaeological and historical “laboratories” are investigated under the basic assumption that humans and environments have deeply shaped each other, creating socio-environmental connectivities which still persist today. A better understanding of interwoven past socio-environmental dynamics will shed light on the “roots” of current challenges and crises under diverse economic, ecological, and social conditions. Within ROOTS, the **Reflective Turn Forum** applies a hermeneutic approach enabling ROOTS to embrace the manifold theoretical and practical approaches of the individual research units and therefore to reach an overarching epistemological and interpretative research dialogue.

Our chosen **essay topic** calls for contributions that take a reflective, critical, and interdisciplinary point of view to the question. We particularly welcome essays that work in the “middle range” combining philosophical and other theoretical understandings of big ideas and big question with empirical and historically grounded understanding of real processes. The ROOTS research cluster is particularly interested in critical investigations of whether there may be recurring patterns in human development, perhaps due to social evolutionary pressures, or recurring group dynamics pertaining to demands of social organisation, or due to something else still. Of keen interest is also the issue of past-present connectivity, that is, whether past processes or conceptions thereof could be a guide in the study of the present, and vice versa.

For questions, contact essay@roots.uni-kiel.de with “ROOTS Essay Competition” on the subject line.

Organising Committee

/ Vesa Arponen

/ Dana Zentgraf

/ Johannes Müller

/ Konrad Ott