"Of course, many other places could stake claims as momentous, and many of these claims could be made on medieval grounds. This puts the historian of France's pre-modern components in a tough position. Should I embrace the opportunity to substantiate such claims in a bid for my own relevance?...making use of the medieval in this way–and old tendency strengthened by new trends in the second half of the twentieth century–results in the further telescoping of historical time and the flattening of the past's textured landscape. The Middle Ages becomes either a proving ground for modern agendas or a waste dump for those aspects of modernity that we would prefer to jettison, a colony of modernity inhabited by "people without history" of their own." 38 yes, however, how do we escape this? All interpretations of the past are motivated by present concerns and have political implications (not so much a priori but because history is linked to politics in modern society) and therefore the past will always be a proving ground for some modern agenda even if it is not the Modern agenda

the answer provided is to be more careful, more cautious, more speculative; in other words to be self-aware of the problem but this in itself does not really address the problem; in fact, it seems to imply, by default that the problem is unescapable; it is not simply enough to not dismiss an era as dark, backward, or quaint for a. this runs the risk of exceptionalizing the ordinary and b. this could fall into the trap of highlighting the age as a period of such-and-such and drawing connections to the present day

"what these suggestions encourage is mainly an attitude of profound questioning. If we posit that the Middle Ages should not exist, what new worlds will we discover? What other voices will we hear?" 46 ok, but how do we go about actually thinking about addressing these questions free from the Modernity umbrella?