In the article, “Placing Resistance: A critical Critique of Critical Regionalism,” author Keith Eggener discusses the concept of “critical regionalism,” which is a style of architecture that may be adopted by the people of a particular region to reflect their culture and heritage as well as the perceived personality or image of their region. In his article, Eggener discusses varying perspectives of critical regionalism and the struggle between a local and global sense of aesthetic. As Eggener explains, critical regionalism can be seen as a way in which the native styles of cultural regionalism have served as a manner of resisting the conformity imposed by modern architecture. For the most part, however, Eggener rejects critical regionalism as an architectural trend, claiming that in attempting to achieve a sense of cultural regionalism, architects sometimes based their work on their perception of a culture rather than on the culture as it really is, and that in attempting to capture a regional culture, they sometimes picked just one culture to represent the region when there were, in reality, many. To a greater extent, he condemns the term “critical regionalism” itself, arguing that it is often misused, and fails to accurately describe the concept that it is intended to represent.

A major example that Eggener uses to support his criticisms of the concept of cultural regionalism is Mexican architect Luis Barragán. According to Eggener, Barragán’s work has been considered to be representative of Mexican architecture and cultural regionalism. However, he points out that Barragáns work may only be considered to be a symbol of Mexican cultural regionalism because people from outside of Mexico have called it that. Indeed, Eggener says that Barragáns work was recognized internationally before being accepted and praised in his own country. He explains, “his work was applauded for appearing so very Mexican, or Mexican at least in the sense that people in places like New York, London, and Tokyo could readily understand and appreciate”(Eggener 230). From this statement we get the impression that Eggener does not believe that Barragáns work truly reflects his culture, but rather a preconceived conception by others of what Mexican culture should be. He draws from a stereotype rather than from reality. Further supporting this idea, Eggener points out that many of Barragáns creations were elaborate buildings meant to appeal to the wealthy. However, at the time, Mexico was undergoing “economic problems,” and thus it is unlikely, according to Eggener that the buildings were meant to appeal to the needs and ideals of the Mexican people themselves (Eggener 234). We see here an example of one widely accepted idea of what a culture is obscuring what it actually is. In his article, Eggener urges, “we would do well to remember that where one image of a nation’s culture prevails, others have been submerged or suppressed” (Eggener 231-232). Thus, by using the example of Luis Barragán, Keith Eggener gives a clear example of the incorrect usage of the term “critical regionalism” and the consequences that might ensue as a result. The international community praised his work as authentic, when it did not truly reflect Mexican sentiments. This international attention led Mexican critics, such as Octavio Paz, to encourage the emulation of his work (Eggener 231). This provides an example of attempted critical regionalism that draws from an idealized, rather than an accurate depiction or the region that it is trying to represent. Works like Barragán’s, Eggener suggests, most likely contribute to rather than oppose the conformity of modern design.