“Placing Resistance: A Critique of Critical Regionalism” by Keith Eggener, and “What happened to Regionalism?” by Alison Calder are both works with a focus on critical regionalism and its shortcomings, and in terms of the ideas and issues that they address, the two pieces are remarkably similar. One thing that they have in common is the problem surrounding the study of places and cultures that they address. Both seem to be in agreement that there are two main negative forces that impede our understanding of local cultures. One of which is the assumption that local aesthetics are under attack from the external forces of modernization, and that the main purpose of critical regionalism is to combat these forces through an assertion of local culture in the form of arts and architecture. Calder argues that by assuming that modernization is taking over, scholars overlook the cultures that do in fact resist it to varying degrees. By exaggerating a problem, they overlook the fact that all places are unique, and are not all affected by modernization in the same way. As Calder states in her writing, “The impetus behind a lot of globalization or transnational studies is a desire to resist homogenizing forces. But by thinking in generalized rather than local or specific terms, this scholarship sabotages its own agenda” (Calder). Eggener, in agreement with Calder, claims that this view of critical regionalism as a means of resisting a loss of local cultural identity is a generalization, which is something that scholars should try to avoid. By creating a distinction between modern and local, Eggener argues, we make the assumption that some cultures are powerfully influential while others are marginal because “modern”, while usually used to refer to a global culture, more often refers to western culture and “local” usually refers to more underdeveloped countries. In his work he writes, “That which lies beyond the center is by definition peripheral. No matter how vital, the peripheral is other than, deviant from, and lesser than the center, the norm” (Eggener 232). Just as dangerous, according to Eggener and Calder is discussing regional cultures in a stereotypical, generalized way. Calder laments when her prairie studies conference “becomes a recirculation of literary and critical clichés” (Calder). By seeing a region as an “ideological construction” (Calder) based more on the impressions of generations of outsiders rather than on the local people themselves, she says that scholars will never understand the true nature of regional cultures. Eggener has a similar concern, worrying that foreign views of native architecture are built on stereotypes rather than reality. Specifically, he mentions international support for the works of Mexican architect Luis Barragán because of its supposedly authentic Mexican style, when in reality it did not reflect the sentiments of the Mexican people. Both Eggener and Calder seem to be in agreement that the best way to avoid either of these culture-obscuring pitfalls is to study individual places rather than regions, with particular unique people and influences working in these places. Both also feel that scholars should pay closer attention to native mindsets and their own analysis of their culture rather than relying on the often incomplete and biased views of foreign scholars.

There are not many differences between the works of Eggener and Calder in terms of the ideas that they address, but they may be distinguished by the ways in which they approach these ideas. Alison Calder’s paper focuses on culture as it is expressed through literature and while her paper is well-supported by a good knowledge of her subject, she mainly uses anecdotes and personal experiences to defend her opinions. Eggener, on the other hand focuses on architecture, and supports his claims by mentioning the works of other scholars who have written about critical regionalism. He compares and contrasts their views, and expresses varying agrees of approval or disapproval for them. While Calder introduces us to the problems surrounding critical regionalism, Eggener provides concrete examples of the scholars who have either contributed to or help to alleviate these problems. As a result, Eggener’s paper has a more informative, objective tone and Calder’s paper has a more personal, emotional tone. Both works, however effectively present well-supported cases for need to reform the study of critical regionalism.