McGill explains two competing visions of how print ought to circulate that are highly pertinent to Dickens’s relationship with the U.S. On the one hand, many Americans liked the literary marketplace being decentralized, unregulated, and fragmented. On the other hand, Dickens would have preferred stricter copyright regulations, to stop people from reprinting his works without his permission.

On his 1842 tour of the States, Dickens spoke up in favor of international copyright. This led many Americans to think of him as a ‘mercenary’, as an ingrate demanding more money. Strangely, *American Notes for General Circulation* makes no reference to Dickens’s literary reception. McGill argues that this absence of reference reflects the impossible situation Dickens was in, the ‘stalemate’ between submitting to decentralized trade practices on the one hand and appearing to be a mercenary by protesting against them on the other. It was easier, perhaps, for Dickens to simply not mention his ‘literary reception’ at all.

Dickens spends much of his time travelling in *American Notes*, and McGill argues that the ‘narrative disorderliness’ engendered by that constant travelling can be seen as a result of not trying to represent a decentralized nation. With no final, ultimate, central destination, Dickens is endlessly in transit. When Dickens does get a break from travelling, what he sees is repetitious: everywhere looks, not deliberately, largely the same. This accidental repetitiousness on the part of different states, McGill argues, is also represented as a result of national decentralization: without overarching governance, communities ‘endlessly, unknowingly repeat themselves’. McGill argues that this disseminated repetition of communities throughout the U.S. reflects the disseminated repetition of Dickens’s texts throughout the U.S., which was made possible by the decentralized and unregulated print market.

When Dickens takes a stance against slavery in “Passage Home”, he reprints slaveowners’ advertisements in newspapers as evidence against those slaveowners. Reprinting the slaveowners’ violent testimonies complicates Dickens’s ‘unresolved struggle with the politics of print’, especially since his reprinting of the testimonies is itself lifted from Theodore Weld’s pamphlet *American Slavery As It Is* (1839). Dickens describes the local newspapers he reprints as if they constitute a centralised body, a single “Press” that could be blamed for America’s moral problems. The very fact that Dickens was able to freely reprint and disseminate those newspapers, though, is itself a symptom of how decentralized and fragmented print culture still was in the U.S.

John Forster’s anonymous article ‘The Newspaper Literature of America’ was published shortly before *American Notes*. Therein, Forster draws a parallel between the lack of hierarchy in American print culture and the absence of any hierarchy between the government and the printing presses. ‘By contrast,’ McGill paraphrases Forster, ‘England possesses a capital city with a well-defined social hierarchy that is powerful enough to keep a licentious press in check.’ This distinction between America and Britain finds its way into *Martin Chuzzlewit*, where London is a centralising idea, representative of a country; Dickens could find no such centralised, widely representative figure or space in decentralized America.

In his final tour of the U.S., 1867-68, Dickens went back on some of his earlier criticisms of the States. He promised that he would ‘cause’ his praise of the country ‘to be republished’, which was also, in a way, an affirmation of his own ultimate power to control the circulation of his work. On the other hand, it was American publishing firm Ticknor & Fields who both ‘financially guaranteed’ the 67-68 reading tour, and who most clearly ‘stood to take advantage of the publicity that would be generated from the famous author’s visit’. Thus, Dickens’s complex and paradoxical relationship to print culture in the U.S. continued.