

Brain transplant

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MIT-0

Transpile Brainfuck code to Typst

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BRAIN TRANSPLANT provides a Brainfuck-to-Typst transpiler. Let's unpack this mouthful gibberish. *Brainfuck* is a minimalist esoteric programming language that consists of only eight simple instructions yet is Turing-complete (which essentially means everything computable by a fully-fledged language on a computer is in principle computable by it and vice versa). A *transpiler* is a program that translates a program given in a certain programming language to an equivalent program in another language. In our case the package takes a program written in Brainfuck and translates it into Typst code, which can then be displayed or run (evaluated); for example:

```
#import "@preview/brain-transplant:0.1.0": *  
  
#raw(brain-transplant("+++++[>,<]", input: "Hi Mom!", evaluate: true))  
  
-----  
Hi Mom!
```

All this has no real practical use, but it's very amusing (mindbogglingly so even 🤖) if you're into programming, minimalism, recreational and artistic use of math and technology, formal rules, meta and the like.

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Part I

Introduction

I.1 The Brainfuck language

The world of esoteric programming languages (*esolangs*) is a wonderland of unpractical yet eye-opening languages which seem odd at first glance and odder in a deeper look. Brainfuck (created in 1993 by Urban Müller¹) is one of the better known of the lot. It uses a simple machine model that consists of a program, an instruction pointer (also known as *program counter* or PC), a one-dimensional array, a movable data pointer and simple input and output capabilities. It has eight instructions, as follows:

<i>arithmetic</i>	+	increment the value of the cell indicated by the pointer
	-	decrement the value of the cell indicated by the pointer
<i>memory access</i>	>	move the pointer to the next cell
	<	move the pointer to the previous cell
<i>control flow</i>	[open a loop that repeats until the cell indicated by the pointer is 0; a more verbose description: if the data at the pointer is zero, then instead of moving the program counter forward to the next instruction, jump it forward to the instruction after the matching] instruction
]	close a loop ; a more verbose description: if the data at the pointer is nonzero, then instead of moving the instruction pointer forward to the next instruction, jump it back to the instruction after the matching [instruction
<i>I/O</i>	.	output the data at the pointer (normally prints its ASCII value)
	,	read one item from the input and store it in the cell indicated by the pointer

The interesting thing is that this minimal system can be proven to be the identical to a fully-fledged programming language in terms of what is computable. In computer science jargon, it's said to be *Turing-complete*. This doesn't mean it's *easy*, *practical* or *efficient* to use Brainfuck for anything (i.e. anything beyond the joy of creating and appreciating neat little programs), but it's *possible* to use it for all computational tasks solvable by a computer.

If this resonates with you I wholeheartedly suggest you read the book *Gödel, Escher, Bach: an Eternal Golden Braid* by Douglas Hofstadter. Also consider embracing the rabbit hole and delving into esolangs; this talk² is a nice introduction.

I.2 Transpiling

There are several ways to make code written in any programming language run on a machine:

¹External links in this document are denoted with a red circle, following Butterick's *Practical typography*³.

- One common way is to *compile* it, which means a program (a *compiler*) converts the high-level code to machine code ('1s and 0s' as it's commonly put in non-technical terms) that can run on the hardware directly. Languages such as C and Rust are canonically compiled.
- Another common strategy is to *interpret* it on the fly, which means a program (an *interpreter* this time, as you've guessed astutely...) reads the code and acts as it instructs, mediating between the code and the computer while it runs the program. Languages such as Python and Lua are canonically interpreted.
- Yet another strategy is to *transpile* (translate) the code to another language, which then can be compiled or interpreted by proper compilers and interpreters. The process is also known as *source-to-source compiling* or *transcompiling*. TypeScript is canonically transpiled, to JavaScript.

There's already a Brainfuck interpreter written in Typst, called [ESOTEFY](#)[°], but I wanted to implement a *transpiler*, ergo [BRAIN TRANSPLANT](#), which provides a function that takes a Brainfuck program as its input and produces a Typst program that preforms the same task. I got the inspiration while reading this [gemlog post](#)[°] (also available on the [web](#)[°]; [code](#)[°]) when I couldn't sleep and was so excited by how straightforward it is to transpile Brainfuck to C that I decided to make one for Typst, written in Typst, first thing in the morning. It was indeed very straightforward to implement; writing this documentation took way more time to write than the package itself...

I.3 Name

The name [BRAIN TRANSPLANT](#) combines the name of the programming language (Brainfuck) with the process the package performs (transpiling). The medical procedure of transplanting a brain — or, from the other perspective, a whole-body transplant — is not practised in humans, but the concept is explored in science fiction.

I.4 Logo



The logo features a minimalist icon of a brain with < on the left hemisphere and > on the right; see [§ I.5](#) for attribution. The background colour is the same shade of turquoise used by [MANTYS](#).

I.5 Copyright and licence

[BRAIN TRANSPLANT](#) is released under MIT-0[°].

The logo features an image[°] by Arief Mochjiyat[°] which is released under CC BY-3.0. I attribute them willingly, as I find the graphics very fitting for the logo. Go check their other icons[°].

I.6 Versioning and stability

[BRAIN TRANSPLANT](#) follows the Semantic Versioning scheme (SemVer 2.0.0[°]). While it is fully usable in its current form (version 0.*.*), changes to the API might occur in future versions. This should not pose a problem:

- When you import a package in Typst you can indicate the version (for example, `#import "@preview/example:0.1.0"`), so no surprises should occur.
- Changes to the API will be clearly indicated.

I.7 Participation and contact

If there is anything that doesn't work well or any feature you want added or changed, don't hesitate to open an [issue](#) on the Git repository, and I will do my best to make the package more useful for you and others. If you want to contribute code or documentation (changes, additions, corrections, improvements, etc. no matter how small or large), [patches](#) ('pull requests') are very welcome; thanks! The repository uses Radicle, a P2P distributed Git forge; for more information, see [their website](#) and the [user guide](#) (in particular, the sections about [issues](#) and [patches](#)).

Not everyone is familiar with Git and Radicle, so if that poses a problem feel free to contact me in any other way; see <https://me.digitalwords.net/> for contact information.

Part II

Usage

In order to 0.1.0

```
#brain-transplant(  
  <code>,  
  <input>: "",  
  <memsize>: 30000,  
  <evaluate>: true,  
  <unsafe>: false,  
  <numbf>: false
```

) → str

Transpile a Brainfuck program to Typst.

- Argument

<code>

str

The Brainfuck code. All characters save `+-<>[].,#`, including line breaks, are ignored and thus can be used as comments. `#` (a non-standard instruction) prints debug information: the position of the pointer, the value it indicates, the position in the input and the values of the ten (at most) first cells.

```
#raw(brain-transplant(">>#", input: "Hi!"))
```

```
p = 2
mem[p] = 33
in-pos = 3
mem[0] = 72
mem[1] = 105
mem[2] = 33
mem[3] = 0
mem[4] = 0
mem[5] = 0
mem[6] = 0
mem[7] = 0
mem[8] = 0
mem[9] = 0
```

- Argument

```
<input>: '''
```

str

The input read by the program. In order to input specific numbers, use `\u{...}`; for example, for programs which reads θ -terminated input, end the input with `\u{0}`. Note that the numbers are written in hexadecimal basis. For more information read Typst's documentation^o.

II Usage

Argument

`<memsize>`: 30000

int

The size of the one-dimensional array for the use of the program.

Argument

`<evaluate>`: true

bool

Whether to evaluate (run) the transpiled program and return its output (default, true) or output the transpiled program without evaluating it (the output can be saved into a variable and evaluated later using the `eval()` function.).

Consider this simple program that outputs 'Hi Mom!'. When `<evaluate>` is set to true (or left unset), it behaves like this:

```
#raw(brain-transplant("+++++[->.<]", input: "Hi Mom!", evaluate: true))
```

Hi Mom!

However, when it is set to false, it behaves like this:

```
#raw(brain-transplant("+++++[->.<]", input: "Hi Mom!", evaluate: false))

let mem = array(range(0, 30000)).map(a => 0)
let p = 0
let input = "Hi Mom!"
let input-pos = 0
mem.at(p) = calc.rem-euclid(mem.at(p) + 1, 256)
mem.at(p) = calc.rem-euclid(mem.at(p) + 1, 256)
mem.at(p) = calc.rem-euclid(mem.at(p) + 1, 256)
mem.at(p) = calc.rem-euclid(mem.at(p) + 1, 256)
mem.at(p) = calc.rem-euclid(mem.at(p) + 1, 256)
mem.at(p) = calc.rem-euclid(mem.at(p) + 1, 256)
mem.at(p) = calc.rem-euclid(mem.at(p) + 1, 256)
while (mem.at(p) != 0) {
  mem.at(p) = calc.rem-euclid(mem.at(p) - 1, 256)
  p += 1
  assert(p < 30000, message: "🧠 BRAIN TRANSPLANT REJECTED: the data pointer of
  brain-transplant exceeded its maximum value (29999)")
  assert(input-pos < 7, message: "🧠 BRAIN TRANSPLANT REJECTED: tried to read
  more input than what was provided")
  mem.at(p) = calc.rem-euclid(str.to-unicode(input.at(input-pos)), 256)
  input-pos += 1
  str.from-unicode(calc.rem-euclid(mem.at(p), 256))
  p -= 1
  assert(p >= 0, message: "🧠 BRAIN TRANSPLANT REJECTED: the data pointer of
  brain-transplant its exceeded minimum value (0)")
}
```

The first part of the code is a preamble that binds^{*} required variables, and after it the commands are transpiled one after the other, with added `assert()` functions which are triggered by `<unsafe>` being set to `false` by default, following Rust's behaviour.

Argument

`<unsafe>: false`

bool

If set to `"false"`, safeguards limiting the pointer from exceeding its minimum and maximum values are provided. Otherwise, the behaviour is unpredictable in such cases. Compare this:

```
#raw(brain-transplant("><", evaluate: false, unsafe: true))
```

```
let mem = array(range(0, 30000)).map(a => 0)
let p = 0
let input = ""
let input-pos = 0
p += 1
p -= 1
```

with this:

```
#raw(brain-transplant("><", evaluate: false, unsafe: false))
```

```
let mem = array(range(0, 30000)).map(a => 0)
let p = 0
let input = ""
let input-pos = 0
p += 1
assert(p < 30000, message: "🧠 BRAIN TRANSPLANT REJECTED: the data pointer of
brain-transplant exceeded its maximum value (29999)")
p -= 1
assert(p >= 0, message: "🧠 BRAIN TRANSPLANT REJECTED: the data pointer of
brain-transplant its exceeded minimum value (0)")
```

Argument

<numbf>: false

bool

Named after NumPy^o, this option breaks the limit of one byte (0 to $2^8 - 1$) per cell and unlocks larger numbers as well as negative numbers. It also changes the output to show as numbers, not ASCII characters.

```
#raw(brain-transplant("-", numbf: true))
```

-1

```
#raw(brain-transplant("+.", numbf: true, input:
"\u{51F}"))
```

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Part III

Example programs

III.1 Printing a string

Let's begin with a classic 'Hello, World!' program:

```
#raw(brain-transplant(">++++++[<++++++>-]<.,>++++[<++++++>-]<+.,+++++. .++>+++++[<++++++>-]<+
+.------.,>+++++[<++++++>-]<+.,++.------.------.,>>+++++[<++++++>-]<+."))
```

Hello, World!

The above program encodes the string within the code itself; the following uses the input functionality (each , -instruction reads one letter):

```
#raw(brain-transplant("+++++[>.,<]", input: "Hi Mom!"))
```

Hi Mom!

III.2 Making calculations

This program outputs square numbers from 0 to 10000 (source^o):

```
#table(
  stroke: none,
  columns: (1fr,) * 16,
  ..brain-transplant("++++[>++++<-]>[<++++>-]+<+ [>+>+<-]++>>[<+>-]>>>[-]+>[-]+>>>+ [[-]+++++>>>]<<<[[<+++++
++<+>>-]>+<.<[>-----<-]<]<[>>>>>]>>>[-]+++++++<[>-<-]+++++++>[-]<-
>-]+[<<<]<[>+<-]>]<-<-<-]").split("\n").map(raw)
)
```

0	1	4	9	16	25	36	49	64	81	100	121	144	169	196	225
256	289	324	361	400	441	484	529	576	625	676	729	784	841	900	961
1024	1089	1156	1225	1296	1369	1444	1521	1600	1681	1764	1849	1936	2025	2116	2209
2304	2401	2500	2601	2704	2809	2916	3025	3136	3249	3364	3481	3600	3721	3844	3969
4096	4225	4356	4489	4624	4761	4900	5041	5184	5329	5476	5625	5776	5929	6084	6241
6400	6561	6724	6889	7056	7225	7396	7569	7744	7921	8100	8281	8464	8649	8836	9025
9216	9409	9604	9801	10000											

This one outputs the first numbers in the Fibonacci sequence^o (source^o):

```
#raw(brain-transplant(">+<++++++>[>+++++<-]>.<++++++>[>-----<-]>++++++>[>]>++++<<->>>.<<++++++>[>]>-----<<->++++++>[>]>++++<<->>>.<<++++++>[>]>-----<<->++++>[>]>+<->[<>>+<<->]>[<<+>-]>[<<+>-]>++++++>[>+<->]>.<++++++>[>]-----<->++++++>[<+++++>-]>.>++++++>[<----->]><<<->"))
```

1 1 2 3 5 8

III.3 Processing input

This program counts linebreaks, words and characters (source^o):²

```
#raw(brain-transplant(">>>+>>>+>>>+<<],[-[-[-[-[-[-[<+-[>+<-[-[-[-[<+[[<++++++-]<[>[-<]<[>]->[<+>-<=>[-]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]]<[-<[-]+><[>>>>>+<<<<<->[>]>>>>>+>[<+[>+++++++<-[->-<-]+>[<+++++++>-[-<->-]+>>>>>])<[>+<->]>>>>>+>[-]]>]<[-<<<<<<]>>>]),<+>>>>[<++++++>>>>]<+>+[<+++++++>-<.<<<<<]>>>>>>"]",  
input: "My dreams hold diamond nightmares  
Salvation holds the sea  
The night holds silent echoes  
Your love is meaningless to me  
  
Rock my dreams like a lovestruck smile  
Rock my dreams with your love, your love  
Rock the night like a heart-break missile  
Rock the night with your love, your love.  
  
My dreams are with the night  
Whisper my dreams with salvation\u{0}")
```

11 61 346

This one sorts the input (source^o):

```
#raw(brain-transplant(">>,[>>,<<[[-<+<]>[>[>>]<[.[-<[>+<<-]<]>>]><<]", input: "abracadabra\u{0}"))
```

aaaaabbcdrr

III.4 Drawing pictures

Printing to the screen, doing math and processing input is all fine and dandy, but have you heard about Brainfuck's stunning graphic capabilities?

This program draws the Sierpiński triangle^o (source^o):³

²The lyrics, by the way, are a computer program written in the Rockstar[®] programming language. Maybe one day I will write a transpiler or an interpreter for Rockstar in Typst. h/t Q0^{*} 😊

³See also this implementation³, where the program is nicely typeset in the form of the Sierpiński triangle (spaces are ignored).

III.5 Seven-segment display

So we had printing text (§ III.1) and drawing graphics (§ III.4). Why not combine them both? This program, the longest and most complex so far, can print out strings that consist of `()-./0123456789abcdef_` as slanted seven-segment display (source^o):

[illegible]

It's beyond me how this program works. Pure dark magic!

Fun fact: tea leaves and coffee beans are edible, so one can indeed eat tea and coffee...

III.6 Self-reference and meta-programming

I saved for the end the most spectacular, breathtaking and marvellous Brainfuck programs I know of.

Let's begin with a program whose output is itself, also known as a quine^o. The most trivial and underwhelming program that satisfies this requirement is the empty program, which outputs an empty string.

```
#raw(brain-transplant(""))
```

The shortest non-trivial quine is 391 instructions long, at least as far as I know (source^o):

[illegible]

As expected, if we feed the transpiler the output produced by this program, the output will be the program itself yet again:

[illegible]

The following program also outputs a Brainfuck program, but this time what it outputs is a program that prints a given θ -terminated string (cf. § III.1; source^o), for example:

