

8. Macros

Buffers can also act as macros if they contain valid vi or ex commands. To execute such a macro, type:

```
@a      - where "a" is the name of the buffer
```

Example: From a file containing definitions of complex macros, yank one paragraph (say, 20 lines) to a named buffer "a". Then return to a file you were originally editing and type @a. The commands contained in the buffer will be executed on the file being edited.

It is possible to make files act as vi macros by using command:

```
:so filename
```

The most powerful macros, however, are created using programs combined into shell scripts (or DOS batch files), and acting as filters on the text sent to them from within vi. Such shell scripts or programs must take standard input and send results to standard output (which most UNIX tools do).

Even though seemingly strange at first, with a little practice using vi becomes second nature.

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