

literate lisp

an literate programming tool to write common lisp
codes in org mode.

Jingtao Xu

November 22, 2018

Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	How to do it?	1
3	Implementation	2
3.1	Preparation	2
3.2	function to handle reader syntax for "# "(# + Space)	3
3.3	an implementation of original feature test. .	4
3.4	function to handle reader syntax for "#+" . .	5
3.5	Install the new reader syntax.	5
3.6	tangle an org file	6
3.7	make asdf handle org file correctly	6

1 Introduction

This is a common lisp project to show a way how to use
[literal programming](#) in common lisp.

[literate programming examples](#) shows the reason why
use org mode. There are another lisp project [papyrus](#) to
do the similiar thing but it use markdown file format.

By using common lisp package [literate-lisp](#) , emacs [org
mode](#) and elisp library [polymode](#), we can do it perfectly in
one org file with both documentation and source codes,and
this org file will works well with [SLIME](#).

2 How to do it?

In org mode, the comment line start with character `#` (see [org manual](#)), and the lisp codes are surrounded by lines between `#+begin_src lisp` and `#+end_src` (see [org manual](#)).

```
#+BEGIN_SRC lisp :tangle no
(format t "this is a test.~%")
#+END_SRC
```

So to let lisp can read an org file directly, we have to ignore all lines out of surrounding by `#+begin_src lisp` and `#+end_src`, and even codes surrounding by them should be ignored if the options for the code block request such behaviour.

Here is a trick, we define a new [lisp reader](#) syntax for `"# "` ([Sharpsign Whitespace](#)) to make lisp reader enters into org mode syntax, then ignore all lines after that until it meet `#+BEGIN_SRC lisp`.

When `#+begin_src lisp` is met, all org options for this code block will be read and it give us a chance to switch back to normal lisp reader or not.

And if it switch back to normal lisp reader we want to catch the end line `#+END_SRC`, so we redefine lisp reader syntax for `"#+"` ([Sharpsign Plus](#)) to determine if it is `#+END_SRC`, if it is, then we switch back to the org mode syntax, if it is not, we continue to read subsequent stream as like the original lisp reader.

This workflow restricts the org file starting with a comment character and a space character(`"# "`), but it should not be a problem but indeed a convenient way for us to specify some local variables, for example I often put them in the first line of an org file:

```
# -*- encoding:utf-8 Mode: POLY-ORG; -*- ---
```

Which make emacs open file with utf-8 encoding and [poly-org-mode](#).

3 Implementation

3.1 Preparation

Firstly we define an package for this library and switch to it. Package `named-readtables` is used here to simplify the definition of reader syntax.

```
(in-package :common-lisp-user)
(defpackage :literate-lisp
  (:use :cl :named-readtables)
  (:documentation "a literate programming tool to write common lisp codes
    ↪ in org file."))
(pushnew :literate-lisp *features*)
(in-package :literate-lisp)
```

a debug variable is used to switch on/off the log messages for this library

```
(defvar debug-literate-lisp-p nil)
(declare (type boolean debug-literate-lisp-p))
```

3.2 function to handle reader syntax for "# "(# + Space)

There are many different lisp codes are written in one org file, some for function implementation, some for demo, and some for test, so we should define an option to recognize them and decide to read them or not. For example, if one lisp code block is used for demo, it should be ignored when load the org file. And if one lisp code block is used for test, it should only be loaded in a test environment.

So we add a new option `tangle` after `#+BEGIN_SRC lisp`, and it has three meanings

- yes
It means that current code block should be read normally, it is the default mode when the option `tangle` is not provided.
- no
It means that current code block should be ignored by lisp reader.

- test

It means that current code block should be read only when feature test exist.

```
(defun tangle-p (feature)
  (case feature
    ((nil :yes) t)
    (:no nil)
    (:test (find :test *features* :test #'eq))))
```

Let's implement a function to read options after `#+BEGIN_SRC`, actually split them by space and convert key and value to lisp keywords.

```
(defun read-org-code-block-options (string begin-position-of-options)
  (with-input-from-string (stream string :start begin-position-of-options)
    (let ((*readtable* (copy-readtable nil))
          (*package* (find-package :keyword))
          (*read-suppress* nil))
      (loop for elem = (read stream nil)
            while elem
            collect elem))))
```

Now it's time to implement the new reader function for syntax `"# "(# + Space)`.

```
(defun tangle-number-sign+space (stream a b)
  "ignore all lines after '# ' and before '#+BEGIN_SRC lisp '"
  (declare (ignore a b))
  (loop for line = (read-line stream nil nil) then (read-line stream nil
    ↪ nil)
        until (null line)
        for start1 = (loop for c of-type character across line
                          for i of-type fixnum from 0
                          until (not (find c '(\Tab \Space)))
                          finally (return i))
        do (when debug-literate-lisp-p
             (format t "ignore line ~a%" line))
        until (when (equalp start1 (search #l="#+BEGIN_SRC lisp" line))
                 (let* ((options (read-org-code-block-options line (+
    ↪ start1 (length #l#))))
                       (tangle-p (getf options :tangle :yes)))))
        (values))
```

3.3 an implementation of original feature test.

This code block is borrowed from the sbcl source codes with some minor modifications.

```

;;; If X is a symbol, see whether it is present in *FEATURES*. Also
;;; handle arbitrary combinations of atoms using NOT, AND, OR.
(defun featurep (x)
  (typecase x
    (cons
      (case (car x)
        ((:not not)
          (cond
            ((cddr x)
              (error "too many subexpressions in feature expression: ~S" x))
            ((null (cdr x))
              (error "too few subexpressions in feature expression: ~S" x))
            (t (not (featurep (cadr x)))))
          (t (not (featurep (cadr x)))))
        ((:and and) (every #'featurep (cdr x)))
        ((:or or) (some #'featurep (cdr x)))
        (t
          (error "unknown operator in feature expression: ~S." x))))
    (symbol (not (null (member x *features* :test #'eq))))
    (t
      (error "invalid feature expression: ~S" x))))

```

3.4 function to handle reader syntax for "#+"

The mechanism to handle normal lisp syntax "#+" is borrowed from sbcl source codes too.

```

(defun tangle-sharp-plus-minus (stream sub-char numarg)
  ;; 1. read into the feature as an keyword.
  (let ((feature (let ((*package* (find-package :keyword))
                      ;;(*reader-package* nil)
                      (*read-suppress* nil))
                  (read stream t nil t))))
    ;;      2.1 if the feature is '#+END_SRC', then switch back to org
    ;;      ↪ syntax.
    (when debug-literate-lisp-p
      (format t "found feature ~s, start read org part...~%" feature))
    (cond ((eq :END_SRC feature)
      (when debug-literate-lisp-p
        (format t "found #+END_SRC, start read org part...~%"))
        (funcall #'tangle-number-sign+space stream sub-char numarg))
      ;; 2.2 otherwise test the feature.
      ;; 2.2.1 If the feature exist, read the following object
      ;;      ↪ recursively normally.
      ((featurep feature)
        (read stream t nil t))
      ;; 2.2.1 if the feature doesn't exist, read the following
      ;;      ↪ object recursively and ignore it.
      (t
        (let ((*read-suppress* t))
          (read stream t nil t)
          (values))))))

```

3.5 Install the new reader syntax.

```
(defreadtable :org
  (:merge :standard)
  (:dispatch-macro-char #\\# #\\Space #'tangle-number-sign+space)
  (:dispatch-macro-char #\\# #\\+ #'tangle-sharp-plus-minus))
```

3.6 tangle an org file

We also provide a way to build lisp file from an org file.

```
(defun tangle-org-file (org-file &optional
  (output-file (make-pathname :defaults org-file
                              :type "lisp")))
  (let ((*readtable* (ensure-readtable ':org))
        (*read-eval* nil)
        (*print-pretty* t))
    (with-open-file (input org-file)
      (with-open-file (output output-file :direction :output
                              :if-does-not-exist :create
                              :if-exists :supersede)
        (format output
          ";;; This file is automatically generated from file '~a'
          ↪ ~a'.~%"
          (pathname-name org-file) (pathname-type org-file))
        (loop for object = (read input nil nil nil)
              until (null object)
              do (when debug-literate-lisp-p
                  (format t "read object ~s~%" object))
                (write object :stream output)
                (write-char #\\Newline output))))))
```

So when we want to build a new version of [./tangle.lisp](#) from this file, the following code should be executed.

```
(tangle-org-file
  (format nil "~a/tangle.org"
    (asdf:component-pathname (asdf:find-system :literate-lisp))))
```

Listing 1: a demo code to tangle current org file.

This function is only an experimental implementation yet.

3.7 make asdf handle org file correctly

Firstly we define a new source file class for org files.

```
(in-package :asdf)
(defclass org (cl-source-file)
  ((type :initform "org")))
(eval-when (:compile-toplevel :load-toplevel :execute)
  (export '(org) :asdf))
```

So you can use :org to define an org file like this

```
(asdf:defsystem literate-demo
  :components ((:module demo :pathname "."
                  :components ((:org "readme"))))
  :depends-on (:literate-lisp))
```

Listing 2: a demo code to show how to include org file in asdf.

And file readme.org will be treated as an lisp source file in asdf.

Then we install the new reader syntax for org file when asdf perform actions to them

```
(in-package :literate-lisp)
(defmethod asdf:perform :around (o (c asdf:org))
  (let ((*readtable* (ensure-readtable ':org)))
    (when (find-package :swank)
      (editor-hints.named-readtables::%frob-swank-readtable-alist
       *package* *readtable*))
    (call-next-method)))
```

So after you load this package, one org file will be supported to be loaded by asdf automatically.