

# literate clojure

a literate programming tool to write clojure codes in org mode.

Jingtao Xu

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## 1 Introduction

This is a clojure library to show a way how to use [literate programming](#) in clojure.

It extends the clojure read syntax so clojure can load org file as source file directly.

[literate programming examples](#) show the reason why use org mode,

By using clojure package [literate-clojure](#) , emacs [org mode](#) and elisp library [polymode](#), literate programming can be easy in one org file containing both documentation and source codes, and this org file works well with [cider](#).

## 2 how to do it?

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

```
#+BEGIN_SRC clojure :load no
(ns literate-clojure.example (:use [clojure.string] [clojure.pprint]))
(defn test []
  (cl-format true "This is a test function.~%"))
#+END_SRC
```

So to let clojure can read an org file directly, all lines out of surrounding by `#+begin_src clojure` and `#+end_src` should mean nothing, and even codes surrounding by them should mean nothing if the [header arguments](#) in a code block request such behavior.

Here is a trick, a new clojure [dispatch](#) syntax `"# "` (sharpsign whitespace) will be defined to make clojure reader enter into org mode syntax, then ignore all lines after that until it meet `#+begin_src clojure`.

When `#+begin_src lisp` occurs, org [header arguments](#) for this code block give us a chance to switch back to normal clojure reader or not.

And if it switch back to normal clojure reader, the end line `#+END_SRC` should mean the end of current code block, so a new clojure [dispatch](#) syntax for `"#+"` (sharp plus) will have an additional meaning to determine if it is `#+END_SRC`, if it is, then clojure reader will switch back to org mode syntax, if it is not, clojure reader will continue to read subsequent stream as like the original clojure 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

#### 3.1.1 namespace

Let's create a new namespace for this library.

```
(ns literate-clojure.core
  (:require
    [clojure.pprint :refer [cl-format]]
    [clojure.string :refer [starts-with? lower-case trim split]])
  (:import (clojure.lang LispReader LispReader$WrappingReader)))
```

### 3.1.2 debug function

A boolean variable to toggle debug on/off

```
(defonce ^:dynamic debug-p nil)
```

a debug function to print out some log messages.

```
(defn debug [& args]
  (when debug-p
    (apply println "literate-clojure: " args)))
```

## 3.2 stream read operations

The reader class used by clojure to parse source forms is [Pushback-Reader](#), but it don't provide a read line operation, let's implement it.

Before reading a line, let's define a function to determine whether a character is line terminator.

```
(defn- line-terminator? [c]
  (or (= c (int \return)) (= c (int \newline))))
```

Now let's implement the operation read line.

```
(defn- literate-read-line [reader]
  (let [c (.read reader)]
    (cond (= c -1) nil
          (line-terminator? c) ""
          :else (with-out-str
                  (do (cl-format *out* "~c" (char c))
                      (loop [c (.read reader)]
                        (when (and (not (= c -1))
                                   (not (line-terminator? c)))
                          (cl-format *out* "~c" (char c))
                          (recur (.read reader))))))))))
```

## 3.3 reader macros

Unlike Common Lisp, Clojure doesn't support user-defined reader macros.

Based on clojure's [LispReader](#), it is easy to define a dispatch reader macro (i.e. one starting with # and some specified second character):

```
(defn- dispatch-reader-macro [ch fun]
  (let [dm (.get (doto (.getDeclaredField clojure.lang.LispReader "dispatchMacros")
    (.setAccessible true))
    nil)]
    (when (nil? (aget dm (int ch)))
      (debug (cl-format nil "install dispatch reader macro for character '~a'" ch))
      (aset dm (int ch) fun))))
```

### 3.4 handle org syntax

There are a lot of different lisp codes occur in one org file, some for function implementation, some for demo, so a new **org code block header argument** load to decide to read them or not should define, and it has three meanings:

- yes  
It means that current code block should load normally, it is the default mode when the header argument load is not provided.
- no  
It means that current code block should ignore by lisp reader.

The parameter arguments is a string vector contains all head block arguments.

```
(defn- load? [arguments]
  (debug (cl-format nil "header arguments is: ~s" arguments))
  (loop [left-arguments arguments]
    (cond (nil? left-arguments) true
          (= (first left-arguments) ":load")
            (case (second left-arguments)
              nil true
              "" true
              "yes" true
              "no" nil)
          :else (recur (next left-arguments)))))
```

Let's implement a function to read **header arguments** after `#+BEGIN_SRC` clojure.

```
(def id-of-begin-src "#+begin_src clojure")
(defn- read-org-code-block-header-arguments [line]
  (let [trimmed-line (trim line)]
    (split (lower-case (.substring trimmed-line (.length id-of-begin-src))) #"\\s+")))
```

Let's define a new dispatch function for "# "(sharp space) to enter into org syntax, until it meet `#+begin_src` clojure. The reader is returned so **LispReader** will continue to read rest forms with clojure syntax.

```
(defn- dispatch-sharp-space [reader quote opts pending-forms]
  (debug "enter into org syntax."))
```

```

(loop [line (iterate-read-line reader)]
  (cond (nil? line) (debug "reach end of stream in org syntax.")
        (starts-with? (lower-case (trim line)) id-of-begin-src)
        (do (debug "reach begin of code block.")
              (if (load? (read-org-code-block-header-arguments line))
                  (do
                     (debug (cl-format nil "current line no:~s, column no:~s" (.
                                   ↪ getLineNumber reader) (.getColumnNumber reader)))
                     (debug "enter into clojure syntax."))
                  (recur (iterate-read-line reader))))
        :else (do
                  (debug (cl-format nil "ignore line: ~a" line))
                  (recur (iterate-read-line reader))))))
reader)

```

### 3.5 handle end of source code block

Let's define a new dispatch function for "#+" (sharp plus) to return back org syntax, until it meet #+begin\_src clojure.

```

(defn- dispatch-sharp-plus [reader quote opts pending-forms]
  (let [line (iterate-read-line reader)]
    (cond (nil? line) (debug "reach end of stream in org syntax.")
          (starts-with? (lower-case (trim line)) "end_src")
          (do (debug "reach begin of code block.")
                (debug "switch back from clojure syntax to org syntax.")
                (dispatch-sharp-space reader quote opts pending-forms))
          :else (throw (Exception. (cl-format nil "invalid syntax in line :~a" line))))
    ↪ ))

```

### 3.6 install new dispatcher functions

```

(defn install-org-dispatcher []
  (dispatch-reader-macro \+ dispatch-sharp-plus)
  (dispatch-reader-macro \space dispatch-sharp-space))
(install-org-dispatcher)

```

### 3.7 tangle org file to clojure file

To build clojure file from an org file, we implement a function tangle-file.

The basic method is simple here, we use function dispatch-sharp-space to ignore all lines should be ignored, then export all code lines until we reach #+end\_src, this process is repeated to end of org file.

This mechanism is good enough because it will not damage any codes in org code blocks.

```

(def exception-id-of-end-of-stream "end-of-litereate-stream")
(defn tangle-file [org-file]
  (with-open [reader (clojure.lang.LineNumberingPushbackReader. (clojure.java.io/reader
    ↪ org-file))])

```

```

(with-open [writer (clojure.java.io/writer (str (.substring org-file 0 (.
  ↳ lastIndexOf org-file ".")
                                                    ".clj"))])
  (.write writer (cl-format nil ";;; This file is automatically generated from file
    ↳ '~a'.
  ;;; It is not designed to be readable by a human.
  ;;; It is generated to load by clojure directly without depending on 'literate-clojure
    ↳ '.
  ;;; Please read file '~a' to find out the usage and implementation detail of this
    ↳ source file.~%~%"
                                org-file org-file))

  (try
    (while true
      ;; ignore all lines of org syntax.
      (dispatch-sharp-space reader \space nil nil)
      ;; start to read clojure codes.
      (loop [line (literate-read-line reader)]
        (cond (nil? line) (do (debug "reach end of stream in org syntax.")
                              (throw (Exception. exception-id-of-end-of-stream)))
              (starts-with? (lower-case (trim line)) "#end_src")
              (debug "reach end of code block.")
              :else (do
                    (debug (cl-format nil "tangle line: ~a" line))
                    (.write writer line)
                    (.write writer "\n")
                    (recur (literate-read-line reader))))))
      (.write writer "\n")
      (.flush writer))
    (catch Exception e
      (if (not (= exception-id-of-end-of-stream (.getMessage e)))
        ;; we don't know about this exception, throw it again.
        (throw e))))))

```

So if we want to release `./core.clj`, the following codes should execute:

```
(tangle-file "src/literate_clojure/core.org")
```

## 4 References

- [Literate. Programming.](#) by Donald E. Knuth
- [Literate Programming](#) a site of literate programming
- [Literate Programming in the Large](#) a talk video from Timothy Daly, one of the original authors of [Axiom](#).
- [A collection of literate programming examples using Emacs Org mode](#)
- [literate programming in org babel](#)
- a reader macro library for clojure: <https://github.com/klutometis/reader-macros>

- org babel example: <https://github.com/lambdatronic/org-babel-example>
- clojure reader macros: <https://cdaddr.com/programming/clojure-reader-mac>
- literate lisp: <https://github.com/jingtaozf/literate-lisp>