apply() call a function with arguments from a tuple

Peter Sommerlad
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1 History

1.1 integer_sequence

N3658 and its predecessor N3493 introduced integer_sequence facility and provide application of this features, for example apply() that is proposed in this paper.

1.2 Observations

There is a lot of history I am unaware of and several implementations posted on StackOverflow. Also the C++14 CD contains an implementation of apply() as an example of std::integer_sequence in [intseq.general].

1.3 Using tuplevar... or operator...

Mike Spertus made me aware of the proposed language extension to form a parameter pack from a tuple, i.e., by overloading an operator... which might make the provision of apply() moot. However, up to now, no such feature has been proposed to the standard committee and it is unclear if it would make it into C++17. Even if it would, it would just make the implementation of apply trivial.

2 Introduction

Tuples are great for generic programming with variadic templates. However, the standard does not define a general purpose facility that allows to call a function/function/lambda with the tuple elements as arguments. Such a feature should be provided, because it is useful (at least for me). It even is given as an example of std::integer_sequence in [intseq.general] coming from N3658.
2.1 Rationale

It is easy to create tuples from variadic templates either from types directly as `std::tuple<PACK...>` or with `std::make_tuple()` or `std::forward_as_tuple()` the opposite mechanism of passing a tuple's elements as function arguments is not available.

Some suggested to not use the name `apply()` and reserve that to a mechanism like `INVOKE` in the standard library and use `apply_from_tuple()` instead.

2.2 Open Issues to be Discussed

It is open, if `apply()` should get a `noexcept(noexcept(xxx))` specification delegating to the underlying effect. Advice from library working group was requested, but it seems that it shouldn’t get one, because library only provides noexcept specifications for “special” functions, like ctors or swap.

Should `apply()` be `constexpr` to make it applicable in meta programming or concepts? LEWG advice is required.

2.3 Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements go to Jonathan Wakely for providing integer_sequence and providing `apply()` as the example in the working draft.

Acknowledgements go to Mike Spertus for making me aware of the ... pack formation approaches.

Acknowledgements to the following persons on the c++std-lib reflector for their feedback and encouragement: Jonathan Wakely, Andy Sawyer, Stephan T. Lavavej, Jared Hoberock, and Tony van Eerd.

3 Possible Implementation

The following implementation suggestion was derived from N3658, N3690, and StackOverflow (http://stackoverflow.com/a/12650100) and some simplification. It actually seems to work with current clang -std=c++1y.

```cpp
template <typename F, typename Tuple, size_t... I>
decltype(auto) apply_impl(F&& f, Tuple&& t, index_sequence<I...>) {
    return forward<F>(f)(get<I>(forward<Tuple>(t))...);
}

template <typename F, typename Tuple>
decltype(auto) apply(F&& f, Tuple&& t) {
    using Indices = make_index_sequence<tuple_size<decay_t<Tuple>>::value>;
    return apply_impl(forward<F>(f), forward<Tuple>(t), Indices{});
}
```
4 Proposed Library Additions

Add the following declaration in [tuple.general] in the synopsis under the group *element access:*

```cpp
template <typename F, typename Tuple, size_t... I>
decltype(auto)
apply_impl(F&& f, Tuple&& t, index_sequence<I...>) // exposition only
{
    return forward<F>(f)(get<I>(forward<Tuple>(t))...);
}
```

```cpp
template <typename F, typename Tuple>
decltype(auto) apply(F&& f, Tuple&& t);
```

Append the following to section [tuple.elem] after paragraph 11.

```cpp
template <typename F, typename Tuple>
decltype(auto) apply(F&& f, Tuple&& t);
```

1 *Effects:* Equivalent to return `apply_impl(forward<F>(f), forward<Tuple>(t), make_index_sequence<tuple_size<decay_t<Tuple>>::value>{})`;

Delete the example code in [intseq.general] p 2.