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# Product types access

## Abstract

This paper proposes a library mechanism for deconstructing types that parallels the language mechanism described in Structured binding [P0326R0](#). This proposal name them *product types* The interface includes getting the number of elements, access to the  $n^{\text{th}}$  element and the type of the  $n^{\text{th}}$  element.

The main benefits of this are cheap reflection, allow automatic serialization support, automated interfaces, etc.

The wording depends on the wording of [P0326R0](#).

In addition, some of the algorithms that work for *tuple-like* access are adapted to work with *product types*.

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## Introduction

Defining *tuple-like* access `tuple_size`, `tuple_element` and `get<I>/get<T>` for simple classes is --

as for comparison operators ([N4475](#)) -- tedious, repetitive, slightly error-prone, and easily automated.

[P0144R2/P0217R1/P0326R0](#) proposes the ability to bind all the members of some type, at a time via the new structured binding statement. This proposal names those types *product types*.

[P0197R0](#) proposed the generation of the *tuple-like* access function for simple structs as the [P0144R2](#) does for simple structs (case 3).

We are unable to define a *tuple-like* access interface for C-arrays, as the `get<I>(arr)` cannot be found by ADL.

This paper proposes a library interface to access the same types covered by Structured binding [P0326R0](#), *product types*. The interface includes getting the number of elements, access to the  $n^{\text{th}}$  element and the type of the  $n^{\text{th}}$  element. This interface doesn't use ADL.

The wording of Structured binding has been modified so that both structured binding and the possible product type access wording isn't repetitive.

## Motivation

### Status-quo

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Besides `std::pair`, `std::tuple` and `std::array`, aggregates in particular are good candidates to be considered as *tuple-like* types. However defining the *tuple-like* access functions is tedious, repetitive, slightly error-prone, and easily automated.

Some libraries, in particular [Boost.Fusion](#) and [Boost.Hana](#) provide some macros to generate the needed reflection instantiations. Once this reflection is available for a type, the user can use the struct in algorithms working with heterogeneous sequences. Very often, when macros are used for something, it is hiding a language feature.

Algorithms such as `std::tuple_cat` and `std::experimental::apply` that work well with *tuple-like* types, should work also for *product* types. There are many more of them; a lot of the homogeneous container algorithm are applicable to heterogeneous containers and functions, see [Boost.Fusion](#) and [Boost.Hana](#). Some examples of such algorithms are `fold`, `accumulate`, `for_each`, `any_of`, `all_of`, `none_of`, `find`, `count`, `filter`, `transform`, `replace`, `join`, `zip`, `flatten`.

[P0144R2/P0217R1/P0326R0](#) proposes the ability to bind all the members of a *tuple-like* type at a time via the new structured binding statement. [P0197R0](#) proposes the generation of the *tuple-like* access function for simple structs as the [P0144R2](#) does for simple structs (case 3 in [P0144R2](#)).

The wording in [P0217R1/P0326R0](#), allows to do structure binding for C-arrays and allow bitfields as members in case 3 (built-in). But

- bitfields cannot be managed by the current *tuple-like* access function `get<I>(t)` without returning a

bitfields reference wrapper, so [P0197R0](#) doesn't provides a *tuple-like* access for all the types supported by [P0217R1](#).

- we are unable to find a `get<I>(arr)` overload on C-arrays using ADL.

This is unfortunately asymmetric. We want to have structure binding, pattern matching and *product types* access for the same types.

This means that the *extended tuple-like* access cannot be limited to *tuple-like* access.

## Ability to work with bitfields

To provide *extended tuple-like* access for all the types covered by [P0144R2](#) which support getting the size and the  $n^{\text{th}}$  element, we would need to define some kind of predefined operators

`pt_size(T)` / `pt_get(N, pt)` that could use the new *product type* customization points. The use of operators, as opposed to pure library functions, is particularly required to support bitfield members.

The authors don't know how to define a function interface that could manage with bitfield references. See [P0326R0](#) "Ability to work with bitfields only partially" for a description of the customization issues.

## Parameter packs

We shouldn't forget parameter packs, which could be seen as being similar to product types. Parameter packs already have the `sizeof...(T)` operator. Some (see e.g. [P0311R0](#) and references therein) are proposing to have a way to explicitly access the  $n^{\text{th}}$  element of a pack (a variety of possible syntaxes have been suggested). The authors believe that the same operators should apply to parameter packs and product types.

# Proposal

Taking into consideration these points, this paper proposes a *product type* access library interface.

## Future *Product type* operator proposal (Not yet)

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We don't propose yet the *product type* operators to get the size and the  $n^{\text{th}}$  element as we don't have a good proposal for the operators's name. We prefer to wait until we have some concrete proposal for parameter packs direct access.

The *product type* access could be based on two operators: one `pt_size(T)` to get the size and the other `pt_get(N, pt)` to get the  $N^{\text{th}}$  element of a *product type* instance `pt` of type `T`. The definition of these operators would be based on the wording of structured binding [P0217R1](#).

The name of the operators `pt_size` and `pt_get` are of course subject to bike-shedding.

But what would be the result type of those operators? While we can consider `pt_size` as a function and we could say that it returns an `unsigned int`, `pt_get(N, pt)` wouldn't be a function (if we want to support

bitfields), and so `decltype(pt_get(N, pt))` wouldn't be defined if the  $N^{\text{th}}$  element is a bitfield managed on [P0144R2](#) case 3. In all the other cases we can define it depending on the const-rvalue nature of `pt`.

The following could be syntactic sugar for those operators but we don't propose them yet. We wait to see what we do with parameter packs direct access and sum types.

- `pt_size(PT) = sizeof...(PT)`
- `pt_get(N, pt) = pt.[N]`

## Caveats

1. `pt_size(T)`, `pt_size(T)` and `pt_get(N, pt)` aren't functions, and so they cannot be used in any algorithm expecting a function. Generic algorithms working on *product* types should take the type as a template parameter and possibly an integral constant for the indices.
2. We need to find the name for those two operators.

## Product type library proposal

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An alternative is to define generic functions `std::product_type::size<PT>()` and `std::product_type::get<I>(pt)` using wording similar to that in [P0217R1](#).

The interface tries to follow in some way the guidelines presented in [N4381](#).

We have two possibilities for `std::product_type::get`: either it supports bitfield elements and we need a `std::bitfield_ref` type, or it doesn't support them.

We believe that we should provide a `bitfield_ref` class in the future, but this is out of the scope of this paper.

However, we can already define the functions that will work well with all the *product types* expect for bitfields.

```
namespace std {
namespace product_type {

    template <class PT>
    struct size;

    // Wouldn't work for bitfields
    template <size_t N, class PT>
    constexpr auto get(PT&& pt)

    template <size_t N, class PT>
    struct element;

}}
```

While this could be seen as a limitation, and it would be in some cases, we can already start to define a lot of algorithms.

Users could already define their own `bitfield_ref` class and define its customization point for bitfields members if needed.

## Algorithms and function adaptation

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`std::tuple_cat`

Adapt the definition of `std::tuple_cat` in [tuple.creation] to take care of product type

**Constructor from a product type with the same number of elements as the tuple**

Similar to the constructor from `pair`.

This simplifies a lot the `std::tuple` interface (See [N4387](#)).

`std::apply`

Adapt the definition of `std::apply` in [xxx] to take care of product type

**NOTE: This algorithm could be moved to a *product type* specific algorithms file.**

`std::pair`

**piecewise constructor**

The following constructor could also be generalized to *product types*

```
template <class... Args1, class... Args2>
pair(piecewise_construct_t,
     tuple<Args1...> first_args, tuple<Args2...> second_args);
```

```
template <class PT1, class PT2>
pair(piecewise_construct_t, PT1 first_args, PT2 second_args);
```

**Constructor and assignment from a product type with two elements**

Similar to the `tuple` constructor from `pair`.

This simplifies a lot the `std::pair` interface (See [N4387](#)).

# Design Rationale

## What do we lose if we don't add this *product type* access in C++17?

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We will be unable to define algorithms working on the same kind of types supported by Structured binding [P0326R0](#).

While Structured binding is a good tool for the user, it is not adapted to the library authors, as we need to know the number of elements of a product type to do Structured binding.

This means that the user would continue to write generic algorithms based on the *tuple-like* access and we cannot have a *tuple-like* access for c-arrays and for the types covered by Structured binding case 3 [P0326R0](#).

## Traits versus functions

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Should the *product type* `size` access be a constexpr function or a trait?

## Locating the interface on a specific namespace

---

The name of *product type* interface, `size`, `get`, `element`, are quite common. Nesting them on a specific namespace makes the intent explicit.

We can also preface them with `product_type_`, but the role of namespaces was to be able to avoid this kind of prefixes.

## Namespace versus struct

---

We can also place the interface nested on a struct. Using a namespace has the advantage that we can use using directives and using declarations.

Using a `struct` would make the interface closed to adding new nested functions, but it would be open by derivation.

## Wording

Add the following section

## Product types terms

---

A type `E` is a *product type* if the following terms are well defined. Let `e` be a lvalue of type `E`

#### *product type size of E*

- If `E` is an array type with element type `T`, then is equal to the number of elements of `E`.
- Else, the unqualified-id `product_type_size` is looked up in the scope of `E` by class member access lookup (3.4.5 [basic.lookup.classref]), and if that finds at least one declaration, then is `e.product_type_size()`. Otherwise, then is `product_type_size(e)`, where `product_type_size` is looked up in the associated namespaces (3.4.2 [basic.lookup.argdep]). [ Note: Ordinary unqualified lookup (3.4.1 [basic.lookup.unqual]) is not performed. -- end note ].
- Else, if all of `E`'s non-static data members and bit-fields shall be public direct members of `E` or of the same unambiguous public base class of `E`, `E` shall not have an anonymous union member, equal to the number of non-static data members of `E`.
- Else it is undefined.

#### *product type i<sup>th</sup>-element of E*

- If the *product type size of E* is defined and `i` is less than the *product type size of E*.
  - If `E` is an array type with element type `T`, equal to `e[i]`.
  - Else, if the expression `e.product_type_size()` is a well-formed integral constant expression, equal to the following: The unqualified-id `product_type_get` is looked up in the scope of `E` by class member access lookup (3.4.5 [basic.lookup.classref]), and if that finds at least one declaration, the value is `e.product_type_get<i-1>()`. Otherwise, the value is `product_type_get<i-1>(e)`, where `product_type_get` is looked up in the associated namespaces (3.4.2 [basic.lookup.argdep]). [ Note: Ordinary unqualified lookup (3.4.1 [basic.lookup.unqual]) is not performed. -- end note ].
  - Else, if all of `E`'s non-static data members and bit-fields shall be public direct members of `E` or of the same unambiguous public base class of `E`, `E` shall not have an anonymous union member, equal to `e.mi` where `i`-th non-static data member of `E` in declaration order is designated by `mi`.
  - Else it is undefined.
- Else it is undefined.

#### *product type i<sup>th</sup>-element type of E*

- If the *product type size of E* is defined and `i` is less than the *product type size of E*.
  - If `E` is an array type with element type `T`, equal to `T`.
  - Else If the expression `E::product_type_element_type<i-1>::type` is a well-formed integral constant expression, equal to `E::element_type<i-1>::type`.
  - Else, the unqualified-id `product_type_element_type` is looked up in the scope of `E` by class member access lookup (3.4.5 [basic.lookup.classref]), and if that finds at least one declaration, the type is `decay_t<decltype(e.product_type_element_type(integral_constant<size_t, i>{}))>`.

- Else, the unqualified-id `product_type_element_type` is looked up in the associated namespaces (3.4.2 [basic.lookup.argdep]). [ Note: Ordinary unqualified lookup (3.4.1 [basic.lookup.unqual]) is not performed. -- end note ], and if that finds at least one declaration, the type is `decay_t<decltype(product_type_element_type(integral_constant<size_t, i>{}, e))>`
  - Else if the *product type*  $i^{\text{th}}$ -element of  $e$  is defined the type is `decay_t< product type  $i^{\text{th}}$ -element of  $e$  >`.
  - Else, if all of `E`'s non-static data members and bit-fields shall be public direct members of `E` or of the same unambiguous public base class of `E`, `E` shall not have an anonymous union member, equal to `decay_t<decltype(e.mi)>` where  $i$ -th non-static data member of `E` in declaration order is designated by `mi`.
  - Else it is undefined.
- Else it is undefined.

If any of the previous terms is not defined the other are not defined.

### Update the Structured binding wording to make use of the previous terms

#### In 7.1.6.4 [dcl.spec.auto] paragraph 8 of the Structured Binding proposal

#### Replace

If  $E$  is an array, ....

bit-field if that member is a bit-field.

#### by

If the *product type size* of `E` is defined and *product type*  $i^{\text{th}}$ -element is defined for all `i` in  $0..product\ type\ size$  then

- then number of elements in the identifier-list shall be equal to *product type size* of `e`.
- each `vi` is the name of an lvalue that refers to the *product type*  $i-1^{\text{th}}$ -element and whose type is *product type*  $i-1^{\text{th}}$ -element type.

Add a new `<product_type>` file in 17.6.1.2 Headers [headers] Table 14

Add the following section

## Product type object

---

### Product type synopsis

---

```

namespace std {
namespace product_type {

    template <class PT>
    struct size;

    template <size_t N, class PT>
    constexpr auto get(PT&& pt);

    template <size_t I, class PT>
    struct element;

}}

```

## Template Class `product_type::size`

```

template <class PT>
struct size : integral_constant<size_t, `see below`> {};

```

*Remark:* if *product type size* `PT` is defined, the value of the integral constant is *product type size* `PT` else the trait is undefined.

*Note:* In order to implement this trait library it would be required that the compiler provides some builtin as e.g. `__builtin_pt_size(PT)` that implements *product type size* `PT`.

## Template Class `product_type::element`

```

template <class PT>
struct element {
    using type = `see below`;
};

```

*Remark:* if *product type*  $N^{\text{th}}$ -*element type of* *PT* is defined the nested alias `type` is *product type*  $N^{\text{th}}$ -*element type of* *PT*. Else it is undefined.

*Note:* In order to implement this trait library it would be required that the compiler provides some builtin as e.g. `__builtin_pt_element_type(N, PT)` that implements *product type element type* `N`, `PT`.

## Template Function `product_type::get`

```

template <size_t N, class PT>
constexpr auto get(PT && pt);

```

*Requires:* `N < size<PT>()`

*Returns:* the \*product type `N` th-element\* of `pt` .

*Remark:* This operation would not be defined if *product type Nth-element* of `pt` is undefined.

*Note:* In order to implement this function library it would be required that the compiler provides some builtin as e.g. `__builtin_pt_get(N, pt)` that implements *product type Nth-element* of `pt` .

---

**Change 20.4.1p1 [tuple.general], Header synopsis as indicated.**

**Replace**

```
template <class... Tuples>
constexpr tuple<CTypes...> tuple_cat(Tuples&&... tpls);
```

by

```
template <class... PTs>
constexpr tuple<CTypes...> tuple_cat(PTs&&... pts);
```

**Change 20.4.2 [tuple.tuple], class template tuple synopsis, as indicated.**

**Replace**

---

```

// 20.4.2.1, tuple construction
...
template <class... UTypes>
    EXPLICIT constexpr tuple(const tuple<UTypes...>&);
template <class... UTypes>
    EXPLICIT constexpr tuple(tuple<UTypes...>&&);

template <class U1, class U2>
    EXPLICIT constexpr tuple(const pair<U1, U2>&); // only if sizeof...(Types) == 2
template <class U1, class U2>
    EXPLICIT constexpr tuple(pair<U1, U2>&&); // only if sizeof...(Types) == 2

// 20.4.2.2, tuple assignment
...
template <class... UTypes>
    tuple& operator=(const tuple<UTypes...>&);
template <class... UTypes>
    tuple& operator=(tuple<UTypes...>&&);
template <class U1, class U2>
    tuple& operator=(const pair<U1, U2>&); // only if sizeof...(Types) == 2
template <class U1, class U2>
    tuple& operator=(pair<U1, U2>&&); // only if sizeof...(Types) == 2

// allocator-extended constructors
...
template <class Alloc, class... UTypes>
    EXPLICIT tuple(allocator_arg_t, const Alloc& a, const tuple<UTypes...>&);
template <class Alloc, class... UTypes>
    EXPLICIT tuple(allocator_arg_t, const Alloc& a, tuple<UTypes...>&&);
template <class Alloc, class U1, class U2>
    EXPLICIT tuple(allocator_arg_t, const Alloc& a, const pair<U1, U2>&);
template <class Alloc, class U1, class U2>
    EXPLICIT tuple(allocator_arg_t, const Alloc& a, pair<U1, U2>&&);

```

by

```

// 20.4.2.1, tuple construction
...
template <class PT>
    EXPLICIT constexpr tuple(PT&&);

// 20.4.2.2, tuple assignment
...
template <class PT>
    tuple& operator=(PT&& u);

// allocator-extended constructors
...
template <class Alloc, class PT>
    EXPLICIT tuple(allocator_arg_t, const Alloc& a, PT&&);

```

## Constructor from a product type

### Suppress in 20.4.2.1p3, Assignment

, and `Ui` be the `i`<sup>th</sup> type in a template parameter pack named `UTypes`, where indexing is zero-based

### Replace 20.4.2.1p15-26, Construction by

```

template <class PT>
    EXPLICIT constexpr tuple(PT&& u);

```

Let `Ui` is `product_type::element<i, decay_t<PT>>::type`.

*Effects:* For all `i`, the constructor initializes the `i`<sup>th</sup> element of `*this` with `std::forward<Ui>(product_type::get<i>(u))`.

*Remarks:* This constructor shall not participate in overload resolution unless `PT` is a *product type* with the same number elements than this tuple and `is_constructible<Ti, Ui&&>::value` is true for all `i`. The constructor is explicit if and only if `is_convertible<Ui&&, Ti>::value` is false for at least one `i`.

## Assignment from a product type

### Suppress in 20.4.2.2p1, Assignment

and `Ui` be the `i`<sup>th</sup> type in a template parameter pack named `UTypes`, where indexing is zero-based

### Replace 20.4.2.2p9-20, Assignment by

```
template <class PT>
    tuple& operator=(PT&& u);
```

Let `Ui` is `product_type::element<i, decay_t<PT>>::type` .

*Effects:* For all `i` , assigns `std::forward<Ui>(product_type::get<i>(u))` to `product_type::get<i>(*this)`

*Returns:* `*this`

*Remarks:* This function shall not participate in overload resolution unless `PT` is a *product type* with the same number elements than this tuple and `is_assignable<Ti&, const Ui&>::value` is true for all `i` .

## Allocator-extended constructors from a product type

### Change the signatueres

```
template <class Alloc>
    tuple(allocator_arg_t, const Alloc& a, const tuple&);
template <class Alloc>
    tuple(allocator_arg_t, const Alloc& a, tuple&&);
template <class Alloc, class... UTypes>
EXPLICIT tuple(allocator_arg_t, const Alloc& a, const tuple<UTypes...>&);
template <class Alloc, class... UTypes>
EXPLICIT tuple(allocator_arg_t, const Alloc& a, tuple<UTypes...>&&);
template <class Alloc, class U1, class U2>
EXPLICIT tuple(allocator_arg_t, const Alloc& a, const pair<U1, U2>&);
template <class Alloc, class U1, class U2>
EXPLICIT tuple(allocator_arg_t, const Alloc& a, pair<U1, U2>&&);
```

by

```
template <class Alloc, class PT>
    EXPLICIT tuple(allocator_arg_t, const Alloc& a, PT&&);
```

### `std::tuple_cat`

Adapt the definition of `std::tuple_cat` in [tuple.creation] to take care of product type

Replace `Tuples` by `PTs` , `tpls` by `pts` , `tuple` by `product type` , get by `product_type::get` and `tuple_size` by `product_type::size` .

```
template <class... PTs>
constexpr tuple<CTypes...> tuple_cat(PTs&&... pts);
```

## `std::apply`

Adapt the definition of `std::apply` in [xxx] to take care of product type

Replace `Tuple` by `PT`, `t` by `pt`, `tuple` by `product_type`, `std::get` by `product_type::get` and `std::tuple_size` by `product_type::size`.

```
template <class F, class PT>
constexpr decltype(auto) apply(F&& f, PT&& t);
```

## `std::pair`

Change 20.3.2 [pairs.pair], class template pair synopsis, as indicated:

Replace

```
template <class... Args1, class... Args2>
pair(piecewise_construct_t,
     tuple<Args1...> first_args, tuple<Args2...> second_args);
```

by

```
template <class PT1, class PT2>
pair(piecewise_construct_t, PT1 first_args, PT2 second_args);
```

Add

```
```C++
```

```
template EXPLICIT constexpr pair(PT&& u); ... template tuple& operator=(PT&& u);
```

```
}```
```

## piecewise constructor

Replace

```
template <class... Args1, class... Args2>
pair(piecewise_construct_t,
     tuple<Args1...> first_args, tuple<Args2...> second_args);
```

by

```
template <class PT1, class PT2>
    pair(piecewise_construct_t, PT1 first_args, PT2 second_args);
```

## Constructor from a product type

Add

```
template <class PT> E
    EXPLICIT constexpr pair(PT&& u);
```

Let where `Ui` is `product_type::element<i, decay_t<PT>>::type`.

*Effects:* For all `i`, the constructor initializes the `i`th element of `*this` with `std::forward(product_type::get(u))`.

*Remarks:* This function shall not participate in overload resolution unless `PT` is a product type with 2 elements and `is_constructible<Ti, Ui&&>::value` is true for all `i`. The constructor is explicit if and only if `is_convertible<Ui&&, Ti>::value` is false for at least one `i`.

## Assignment from a product type

```
template <class PT>
    pair& operator=(PT&& u);
```

Let `Ui` is `product_type::element<i, decay_t<PT>>::type`.

*Effects:* For all `i` in `0..1`, assigns `std::forward<Ui>(product_type::get<i>(u))` to `product_type::get<i>(*this)`.

*Returns:* `*this`

*Remarks:* This function shall not participate in overload resolution unless `PT` is a product type with 2 elements and `is_assignable<Ti&, const Ui&>::value` is true for all `i`.

## Implementability

This is not just a library proposal as the behavior depends on Structured binding [P0326R0](#). There is no implementation as of the date of the whole proposal paper, however there is an implementation for the part that doesn't depend on the core language [PT\\_impl](#) emulating the cases 1 and 2.

# Open Questions

The authors would like to have an answer to the following points if there is any interest at all in this proposal:

- Do we want the `std::product_type::size` / `std::product_type::get` functions?
- Do we want the `std::product_type::size` / `std::product_type::element` traits?
- Do we want to adapt `std::tuple_cat`
- Do we want to adapt `std::apply`
- Do we want the new constructors for `std::pair` and `std::tuple`
- Do we want the `pt_size` / `pt_get` operators in a future proposal?

## Future work

**Add `bitfield_ref` class and allow product type function access for bitfield members**

---

## Add other algorithms on Product Types

---

### `for_each`

```
for_each : PT(T) x (T->void) -> void
```

### `front`

```
front : PT(T) -> T
```

### `back`

```
back : PT(T) -> T
```

### `is_empty`

```
is_empty : PT(T) -> bool
```

### `lexicographical_compare`

```
lexicographical_compare : PT(T) x PT(T) x (T x T -> Bool) -> bool
```

The following algorithms needs a `make<TC>(args...)` factory [P0338R0](#).

If the first product type argument is `TypeConstructible` from the `CTypes` then return an instance of it, else

construct a `std::tuple`.

### **cat**

```
cat: TCPT(T)... -> TCPT(T)
```

### **drop\_front**

```
drop_front: TCPT(T) -> TCPT(T)
```

### **drop\_back**

```
drop_back: TCPT(T) -> TCPT(T)
```

### **group**

```
TCPT(T) -> TCPT(TCPT(T))
```

### **insert**

```
insert: TCPT(T) x unsigned x T -> TCPT(T)
```

### **transform**

```
transform: TCPT(T) x F -> TCPT(T)
```

...

## **Acknowledgments**

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