

Poly types

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1 Introduction

2 Proposal

2.1 Language feature

This proposal is going to add a new keyword *type* keyword to defines type aliases that represent type erasers who keep their underlying types associated and dispatch runtime invocations properly.

Here is a quick glance:

```
// define some materials.
struct Color { void apply() {} };
struct Texture { void apply() {} };
struct Glass { void apply() {} };

// declare a type alias.
type Material { void apply(); };

void foo() {
    {
        // use Material as a pointer.
        Color color;
        Material* material = color;
        material->apply();
    }
    {
        // use Material as a reference.
        Texture texture;
        Material& material = texture;
        material.apply();
    }
    {
        // host a Material in unique ptr.
        std::unique_ptr<Material> material{new Glass()};
        material->apply();
    }
}

// defining a type alias is not allowed.
void Material::apply() {} // compile error.

// instanciate a type alias is also not allowed.
Material some_material; // compile error.
```

A type alias can combine other type aliases to form a new type alias.

```
type Source{ void read(); };
type Sink{ void write(); };
```

```

type DuplexStream : Source, Sink {};
type DuplexStreamEquivalent {
    void read();
    void write();
};
static_assert(std::is_same_v<DuplexStream, DuplexStreamEquivalent>);

```

A type alias can declare fields.

```

type Account {
    void RefreshData();
    std::string Name;
    std::string Email;
};

class WebAccount {
    void RefreshData() { /*...*/ }
    std::string Name;
    std::string Email;
};

void consume(Account& user) {
    user.RefreshData();
    UpdateUI(user.Name, user.Email);
}

void produce() {
    WebAccount user{ .Name = "Bob", .Email = "Bob@email.com" };
    consume(user);
}

```

A type alias can have function overloads.

```

type Addition {
    void operator>() const;
    int operator()(int ,int) const;
    float operator()(float, float) const;
};

void foo(const Addition& add) {
    add();
    add(1, 2);
    add(0.1f, 0.2f);
}

```

A type alias can be a template.

```

template <typename T, std::size_t I>
type GenericMaterial {
    using type = T;
    static constexpr std::size_t index = I;
    void apply(const T& target);
};

```

2.2 Library feature

```

namespace std {
    template <class T, size_t MaxSize, size_t MaxAlign>
    class poly_ptr;
} // namespace std

void foo() {
    {
        std::poly_ptr<Material> nouse;
        assert(!nouse.has_value()); // no value.
        nouse->apply(); // undefined behavior.
    }
    {
        Glass glass;
        {
            std::poly_ptr<Material> mat = &glass; // accepts a raw pointer.
            assert(dummy.has_value()); // contains value.
            mat->apply();
        }
        glass.apply(); // glass is still alive till here.
    }
    {
        auto color = std::make_unique<Color>(); // std::unique_ptr<Color>.
        std::poly_ptr<Material> mat = std::move(color); // accepts a smart ptr.
        assert(dummy.has_value()); // contains value.
        mat->apply();
    }
}

```

3 Motivation