Digital Image Processing
Chapter 9

Morphological Image Processing

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Contents

Once segmentation is complete, morphological operations can be used to **remove imperfections in the segmented image** and **provide information on the form and structure of objects in the image**

In this lecture we will consider

- What is morphology?
- Simple morphological operations
- Compound operations
- Morphological algorithms

1, 0, Black, White?

Throughout all of the following slides whether 0 and 1 refer to white or black is a little interchangeable

All of the discussion that follows assumes **segmentation has already taken place** and that images are made up of **0s for background pixels and 1s for object pixels**

After this it doesn't matter if 0 is black, white, yellow, green…….

What Is Morphology?

Morphological image processing (or *morphology*) describes a range of image processing techniques that deal with the **shape (or morphology) of objects in an image**

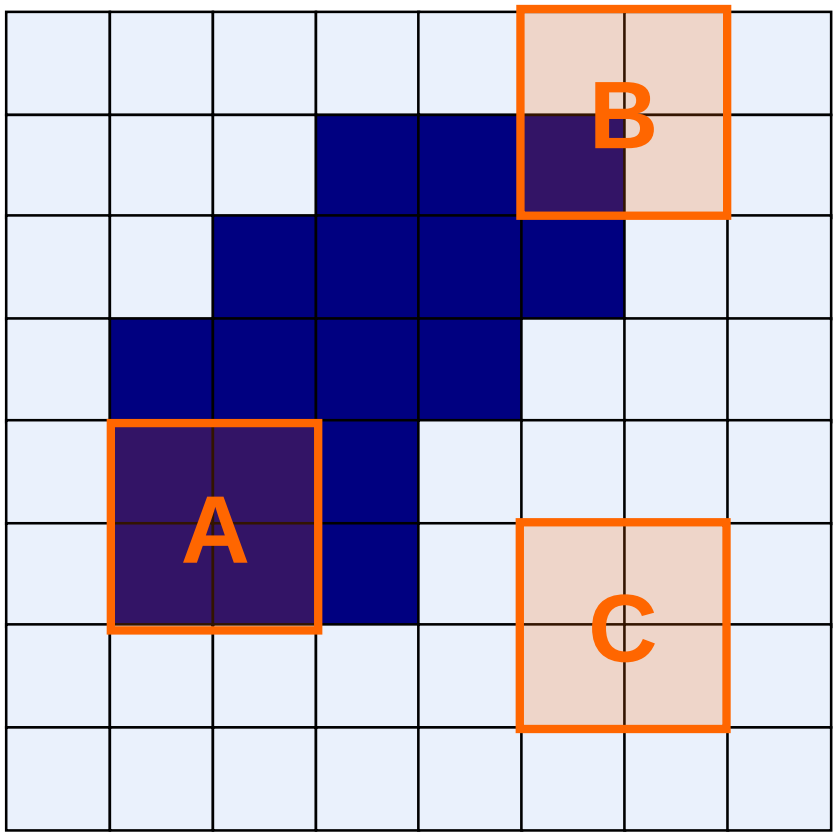
Morphological operations are typically **applied to remove imperfections introduced during segmentation**, and so typically operate on bi-level images

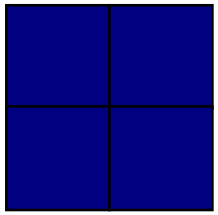
Quick Example

Image after segmentation

Image after segmentation and morphological processing

Structuring Elements, Hits & Fits





Structuring Element

Fit: All *on pixels* in the structuring element cover *on pixels* in the image

Hit: Any *on pixel* in the structuring element covers an *on pixel* in the image

All morphological processing operations are based on these simple ideas

Structuring Elements

Structuring elements can be any size and make any shape

However, for simplicity we will use rectangular structuring elements with their origin at the middle pixel

1	1	1
1	**1**	1
1	1	1

0	1	0
1	**1**	1
0	1	0

0	0	1	0	0
0	1	1	1	0
1	1	**1**	1	1
0	1	1	1	0
0	0	1	0	0

Fitting & Hitting

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	1	B	1	1	1	0	C	0	0	0
0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0
0	0	1	1	1	1	1	A	1	1	1	0
0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

1	1	1
1	1	1
1	1	1

Structuring Element 1

0	1	0
1	1	1
0	1	0

Structuring Element 2

Fundamental Operations

Fundamentally morphological image processing is very like spatial filtering

The structuring element is moved across every pixel in the original image to give a pixel in a new processed image

The value of this new pixel depends on the operation performed

There are two basic morphological operations: **erosion** and **dilation**

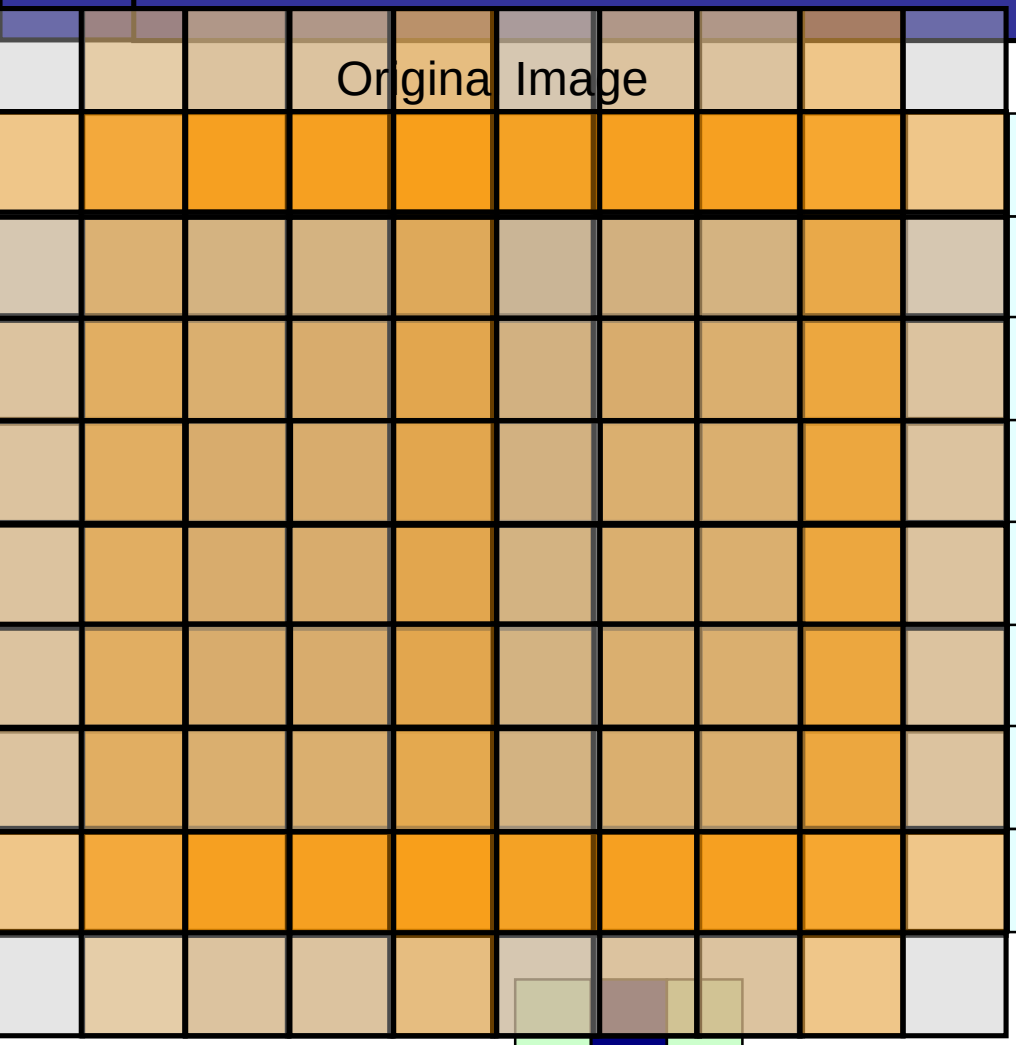
Erosion

Erosion of image f by structuring element s is given by $f \ominus s$

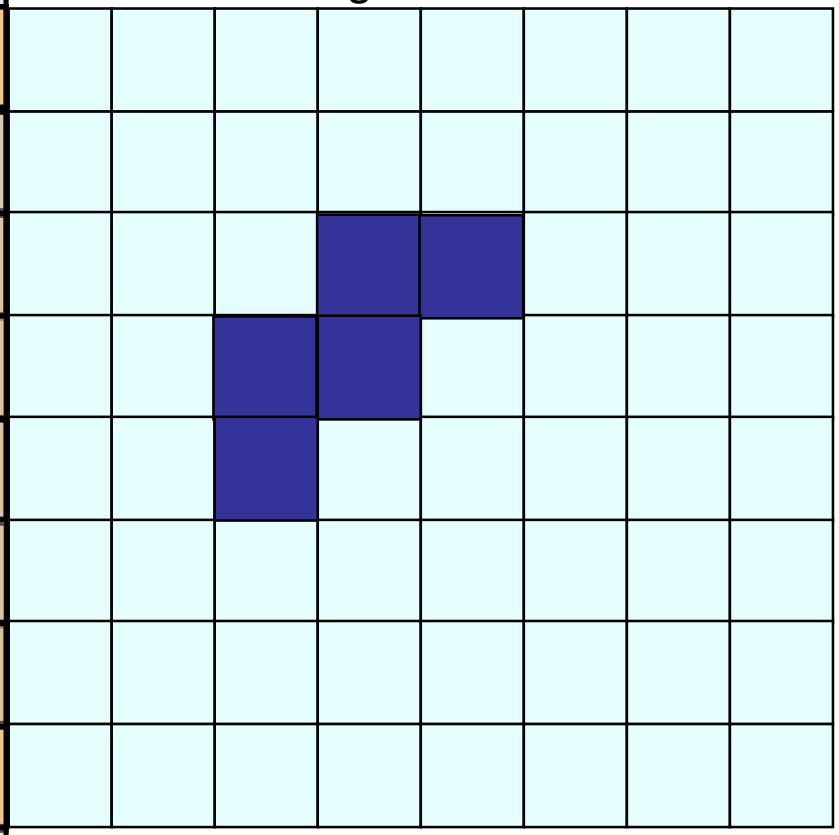
The structuring element s is positioned with its origin at (x, y) and the new pixel value is determined using the rule:

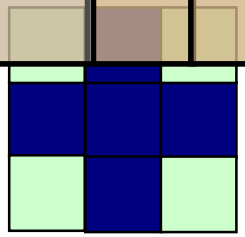
$$g(x,y) = \begin{cases} 1 \text{ if } s \text{ fits } f \\ 0 \text{ otherwise} \end{cases}$$

Erosion Example



Processed Image With Eroded Pixels

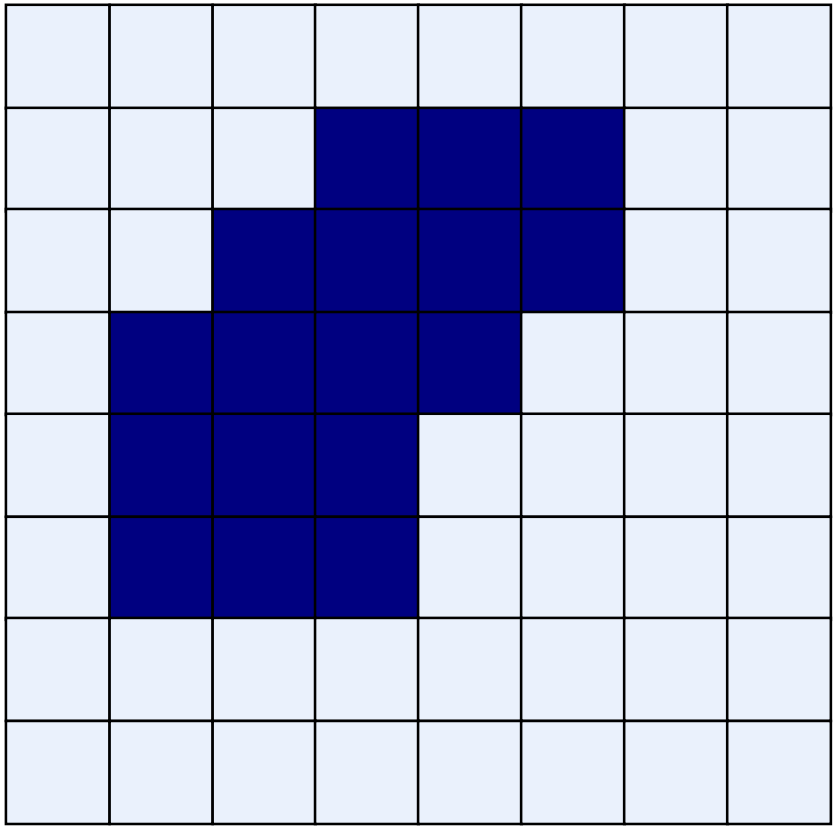




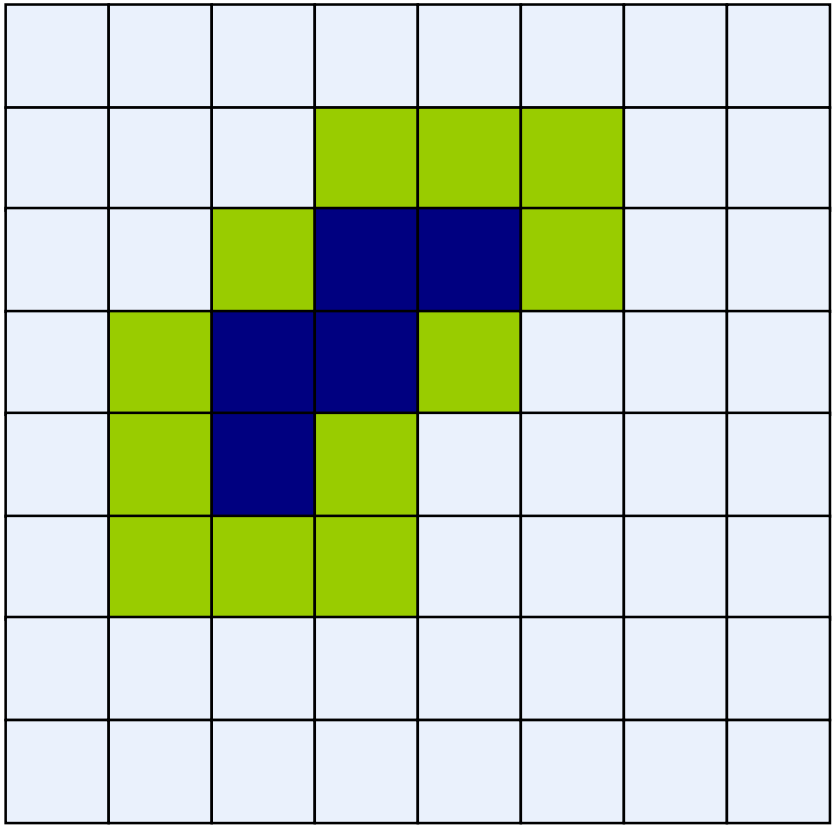
Structuring Element

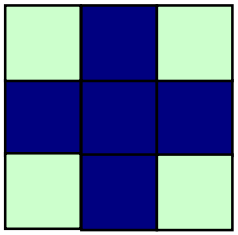
Erosion Example

Original Image



Processed Image

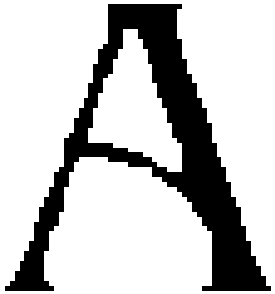




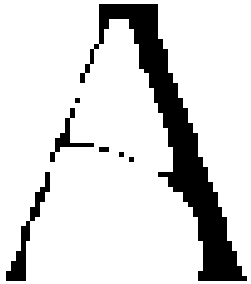
Structuring Element

Erosion Example 1

Original image



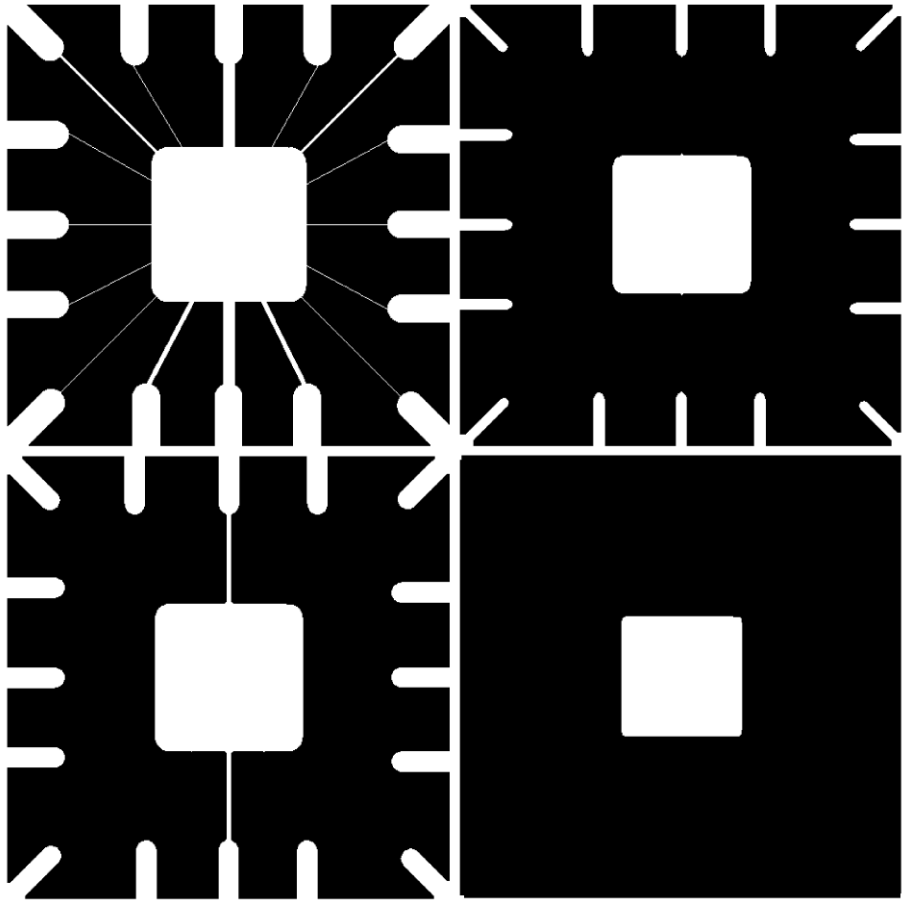
Erosion by 3*3 square structuring element



Erosion by 5*5 square structuring element

Watch out: In these examples a 1 refers to a black pixel!

Erosion Example 2



Original image

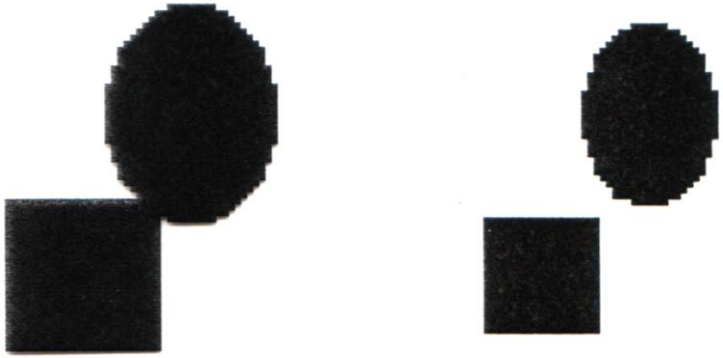
After erosion with a disc of radius 10

After erosion with a disc of radius 5

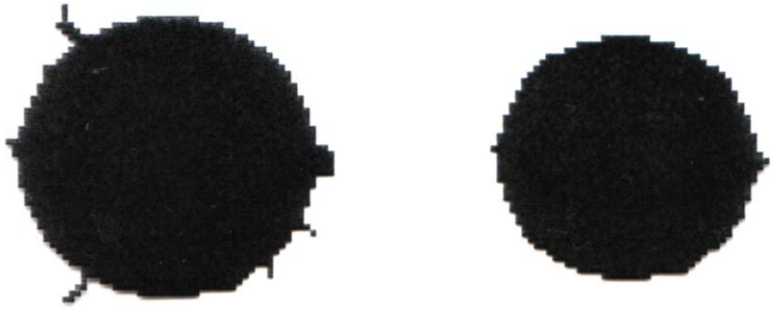
After erosion with a disc of radius 20

What Is Erosion For?

Erosion can split apart joined objects



Erosion can strip away extrusions



Watch out: Erosion shrinks objects

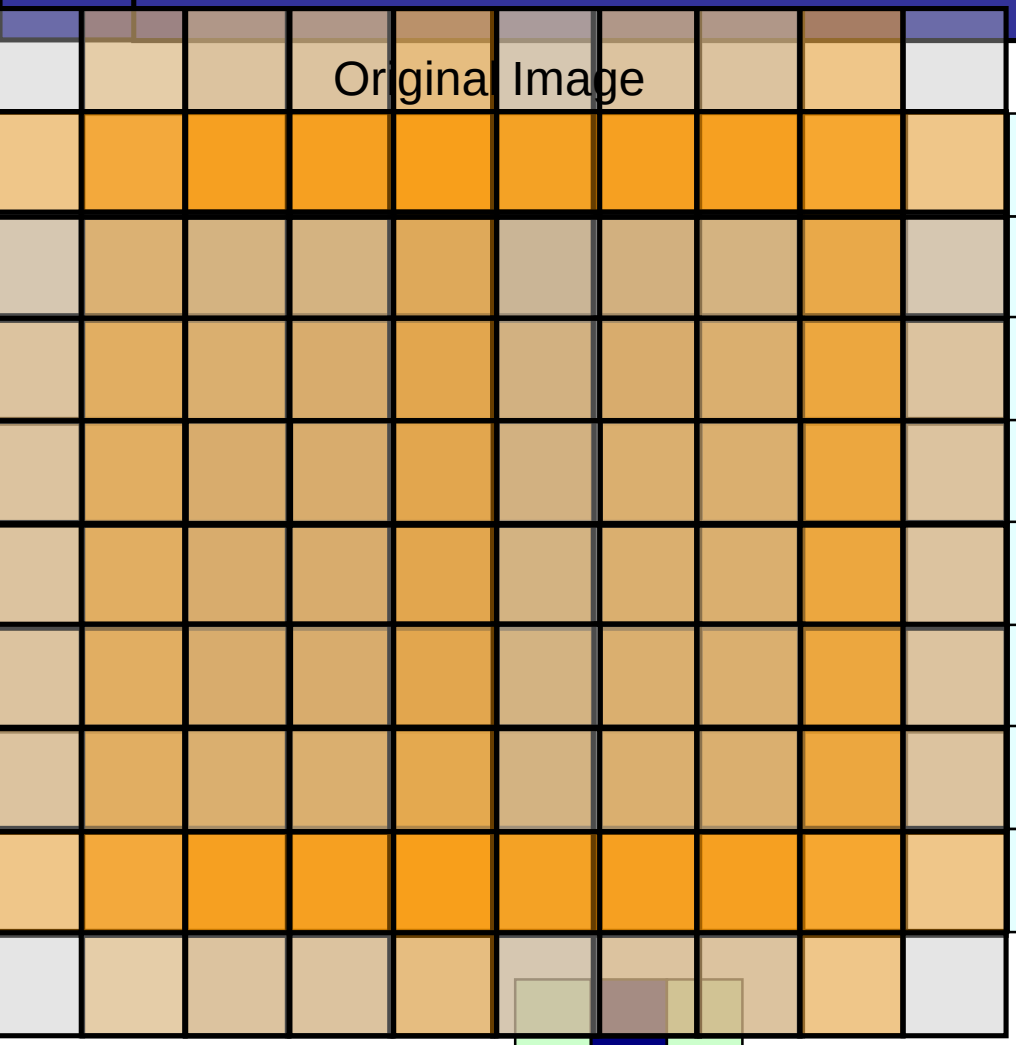
Dilation

Dilation of image f by structuring element s is given by $f \oplus s$

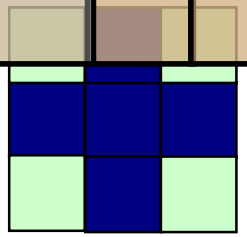
The structuring element s is positioned with its origin at (x, y) and the new pixel value is determined using the rule:

$$g(x,y) = \begin{cases} 1 \text{ if } s \text{ hits } f \\ 0 \text{ otherwise} \end{cases}$$

Dilation Example



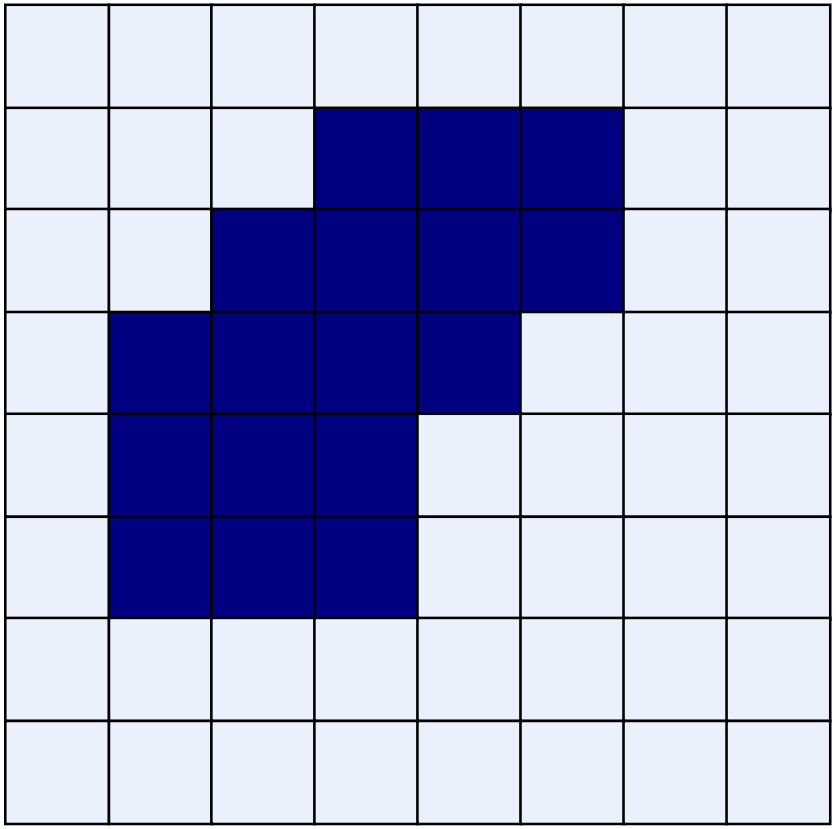
Processed Image



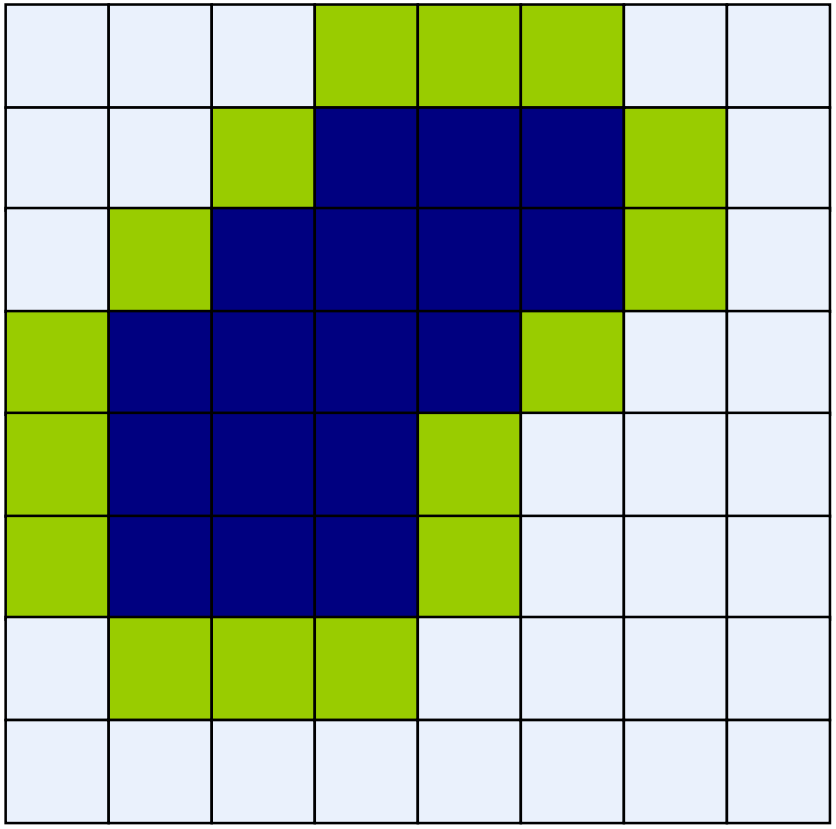
Structuring Element

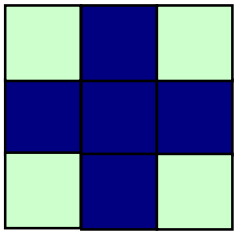
Dilation Example

Original Image



Processed Image With Dilated Pixels





Structuring Element

Dilation Example 1

Original image

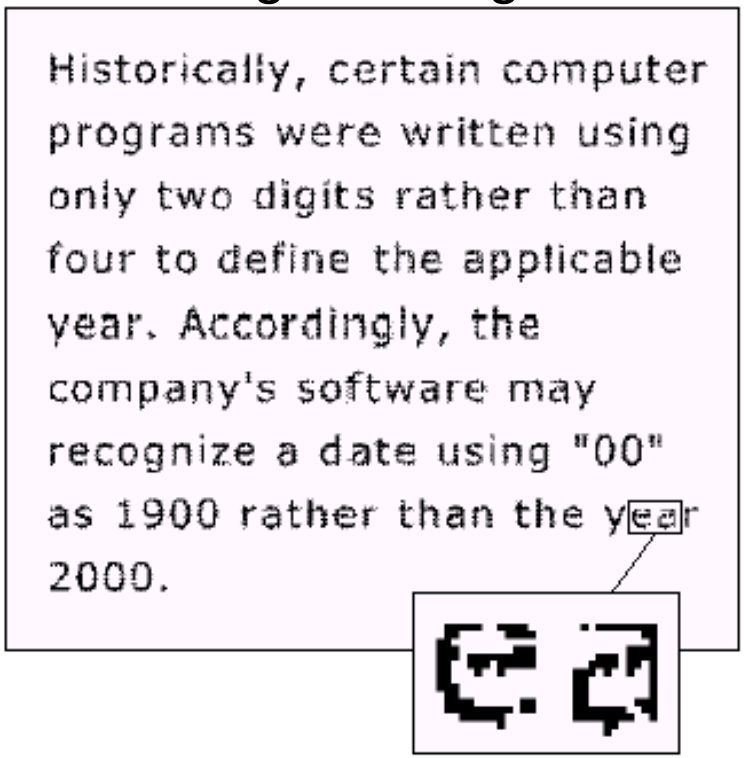
Dilation by 3*3 square structuring element

Dilation by 5*5 square structuring element

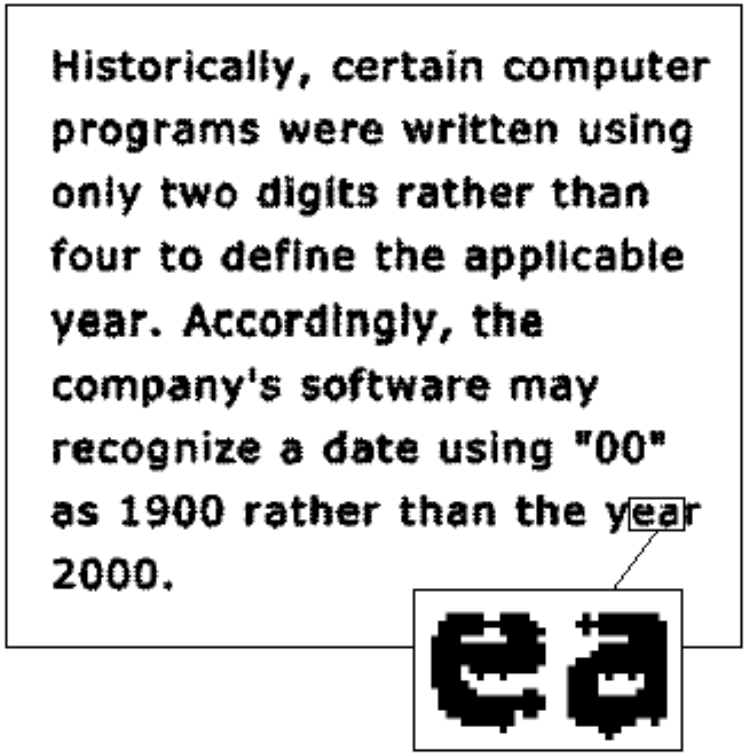
Watch out: In these examples a 1 refers to a black pixel!

Dilation Example 2

Original image



After dilation



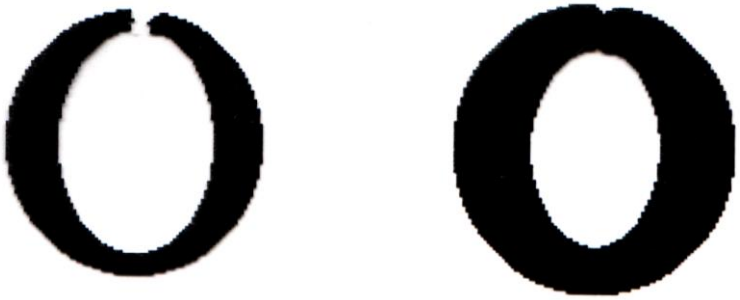
0	1	0
1	1	1
0	1	0

Structuring element

Images taken from Gonzalez & Woods, Digital Image Processing (2002)

What Is Dilation For?

Dilation can repair breaks



Dilation can repair intrusions

Watch out: Dilation enlarges objects

Compound Operations

More interesting morphological operations can be performed by performing combinations of erosions and dilations

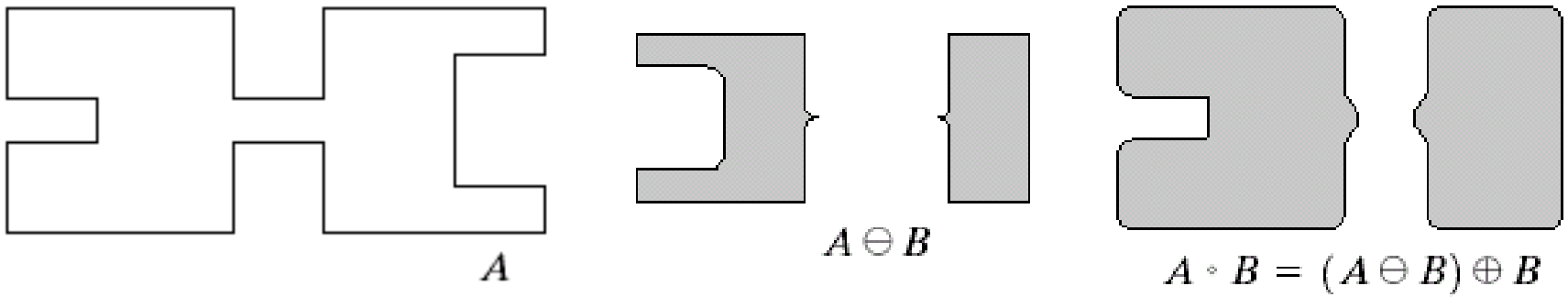
The most widely used of these *compound operations* are:

- Opening
- Closing

Opening

The opening of image f by structuring element s, denoted $f \circ s$ is simply an erosion followed by a dilation

$$f \circ s = (f \ominus s) \oplus s$$



Original shape | After erosion | After dilation (opening)

Note a disc shaped structuring element is used

Opening Example

Original Image

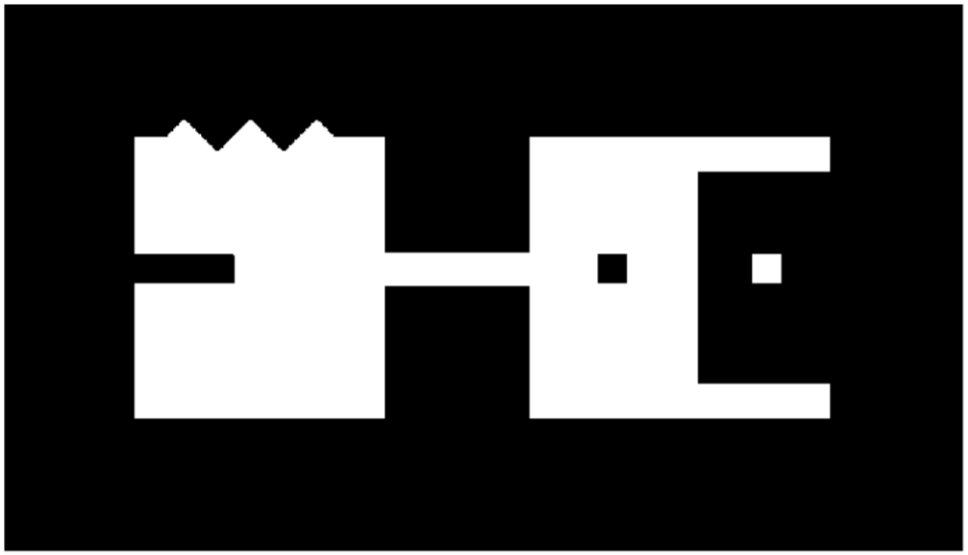
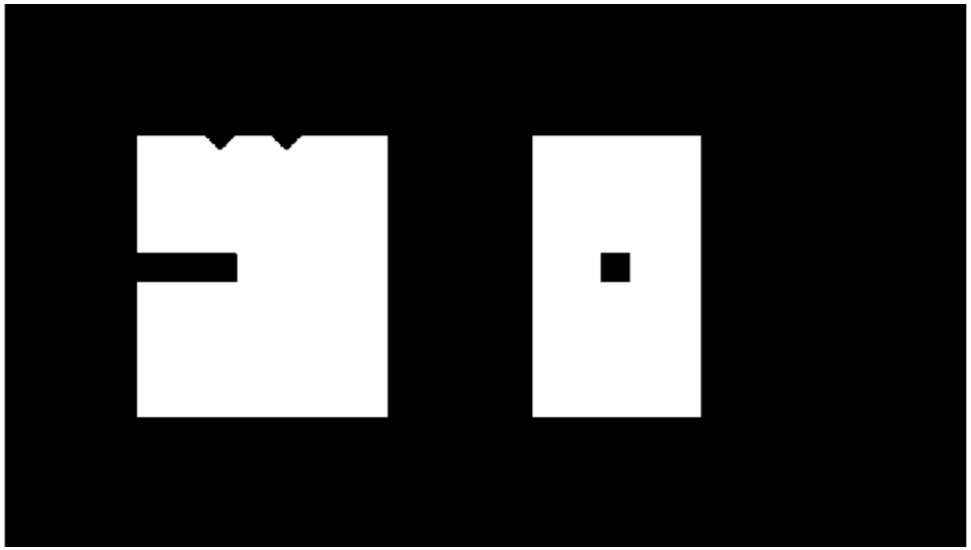
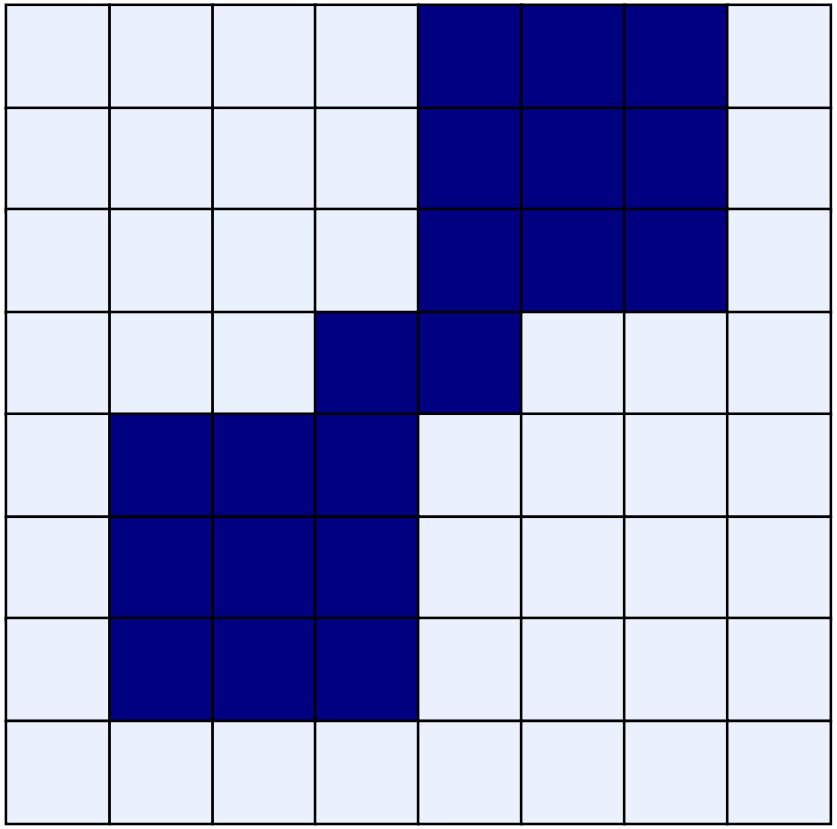


Image After Opening

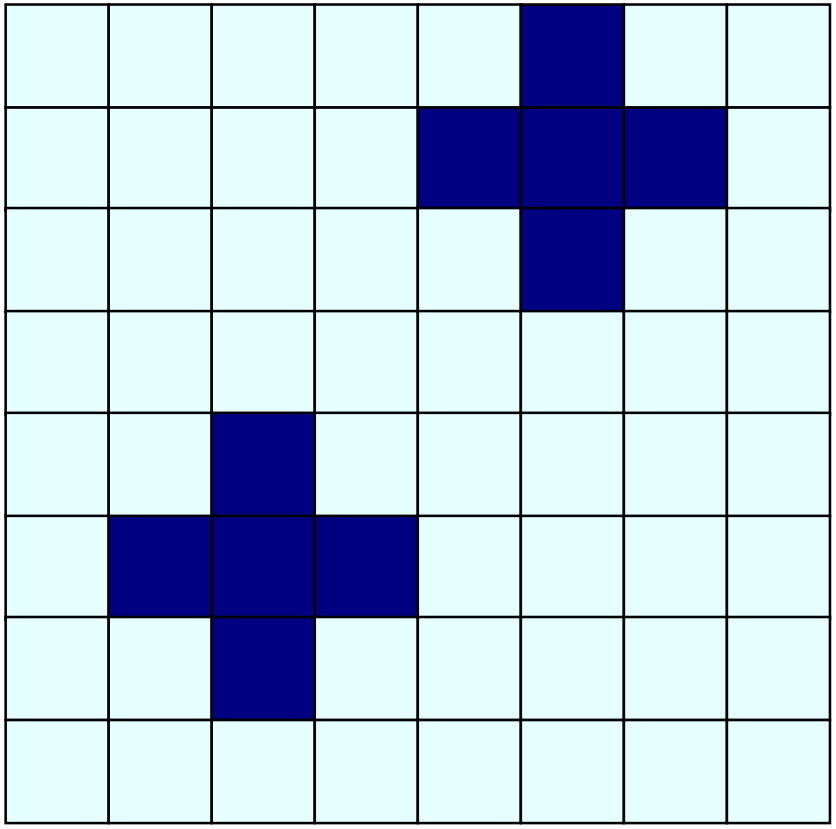


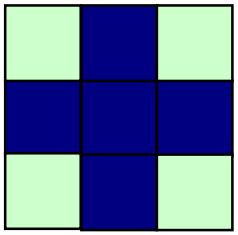
Opening Example

Original Image



Processed Image



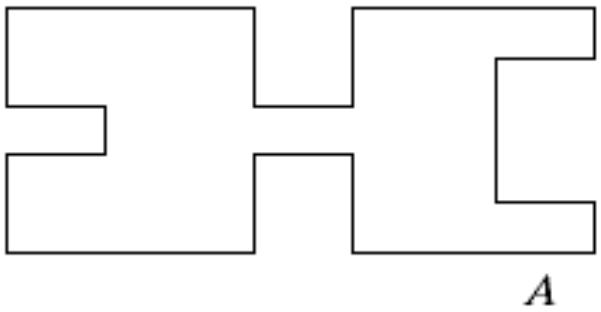


Structuring Element

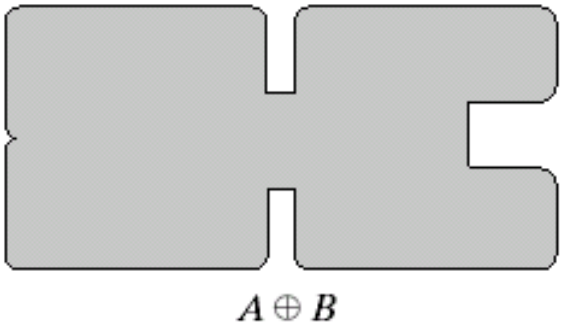
Closing

The closing of image f by structuring element s, denoted $f \bullet s$ is simply a dilation followed by an erosion

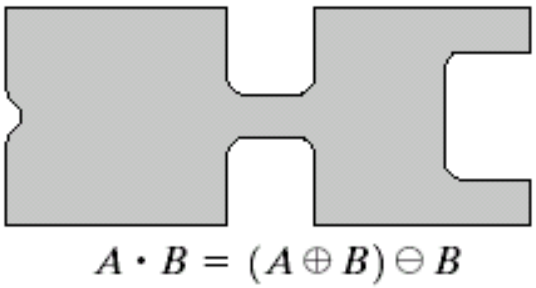
$$f \bullet s = (f \oplus s) \ominus s$$



Original shape



After dilation



After erosion (closing)

Note a disc shaped structuring element is used

Closing Example

Original Image

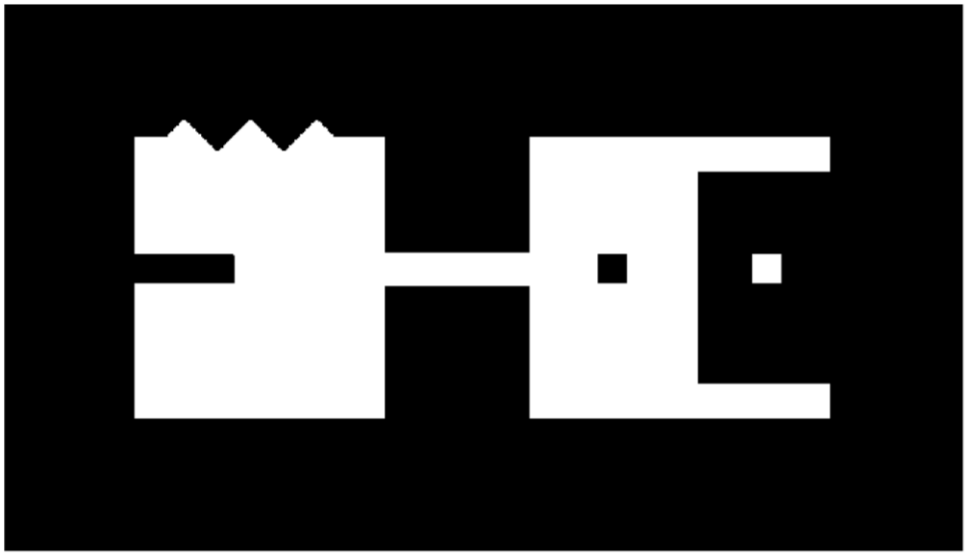
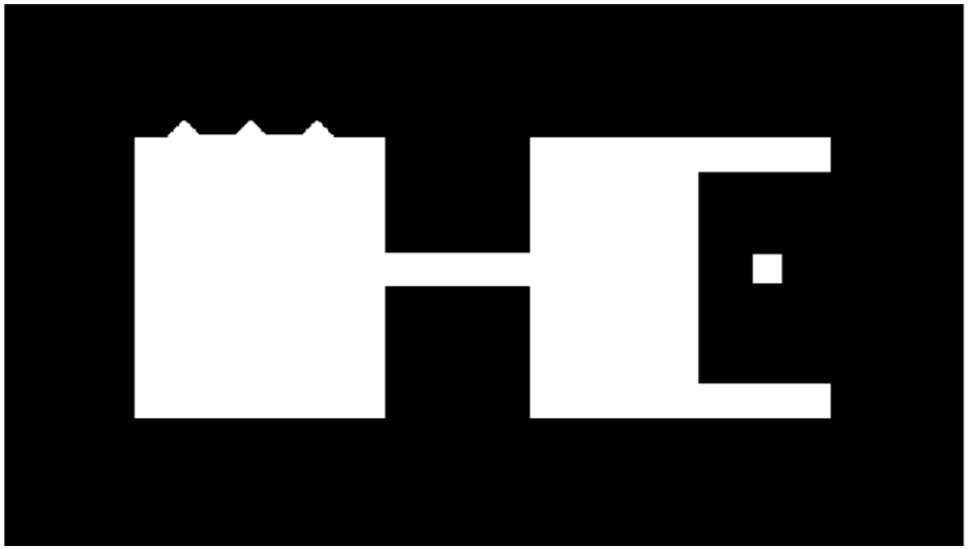
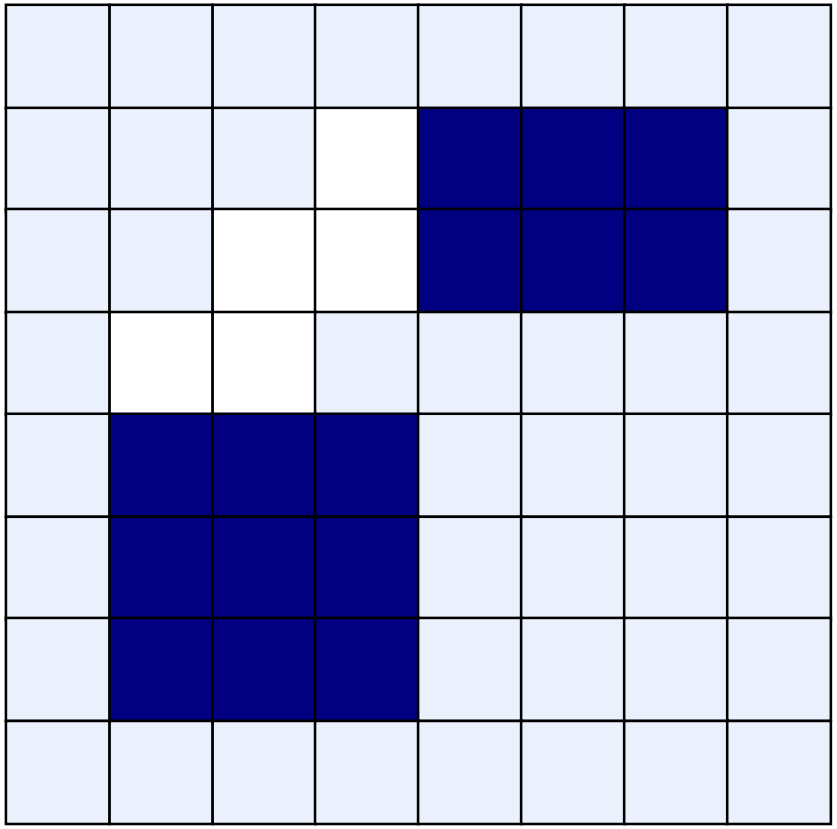


Image After Closing

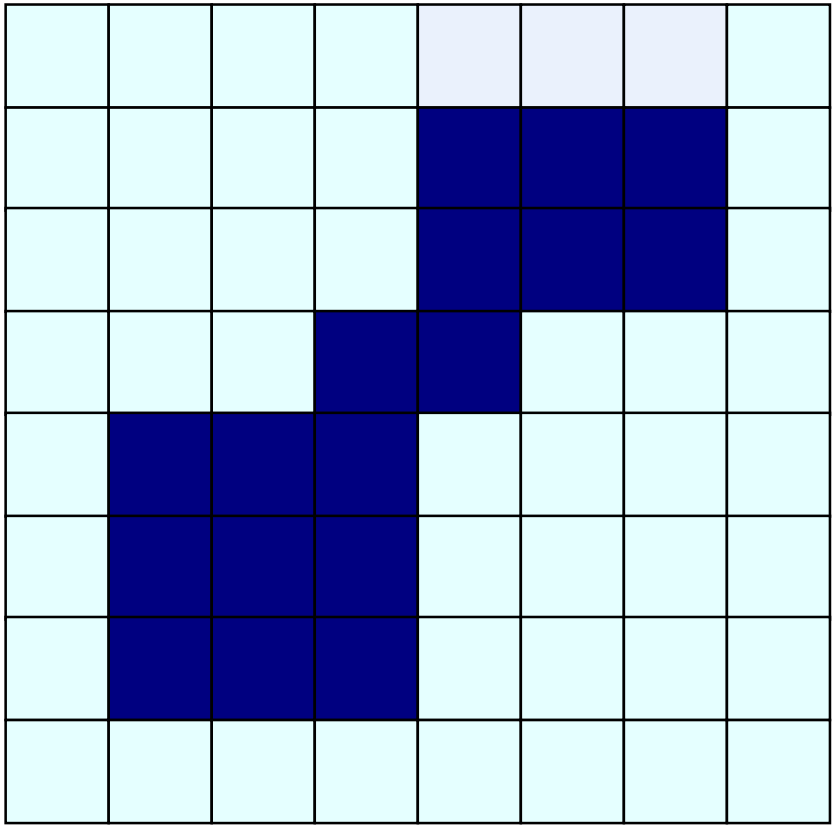


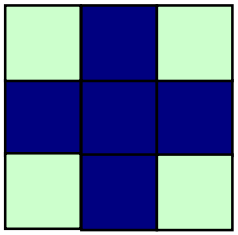
Closing Example

Original Image



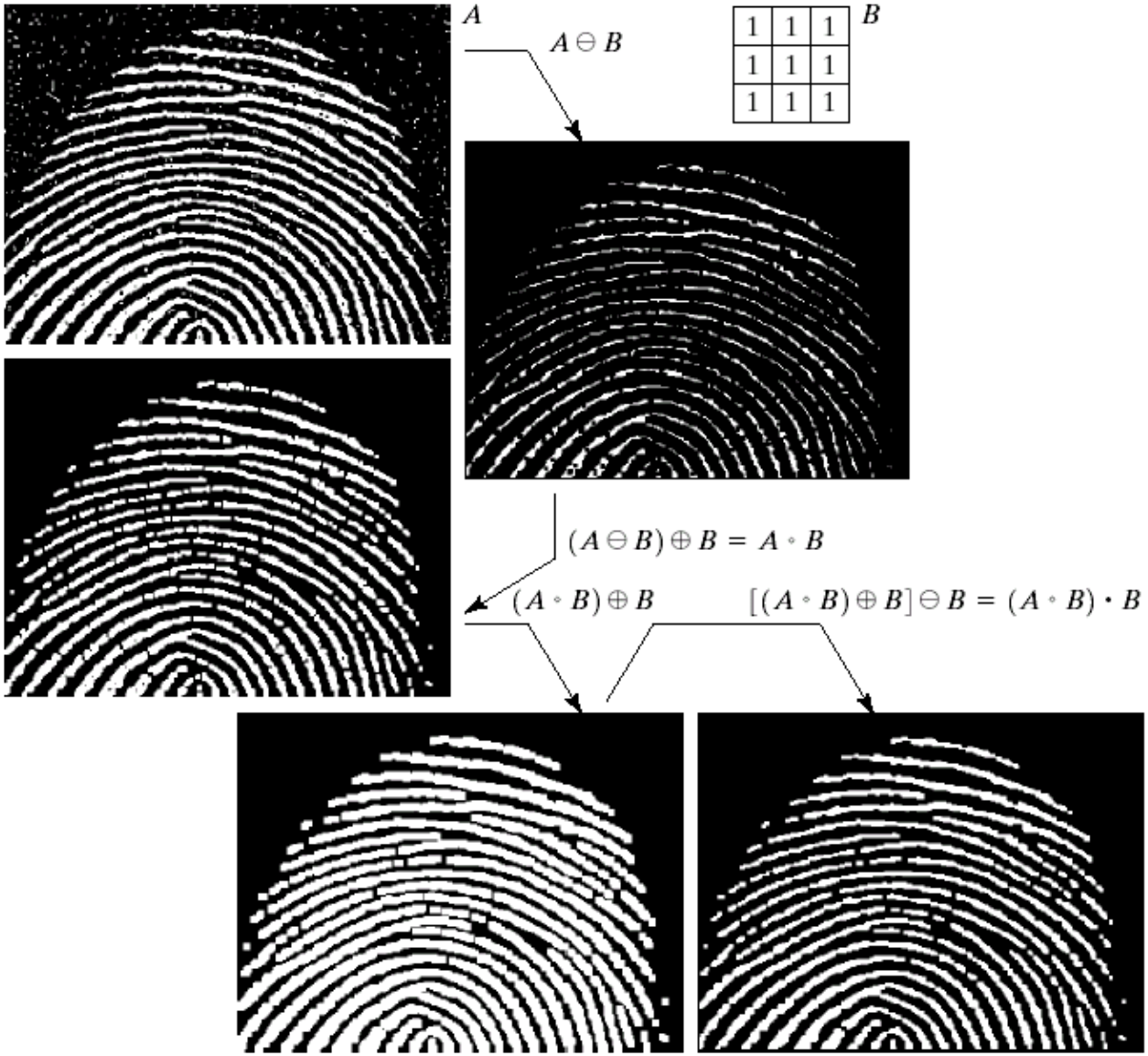
Processed Image





Structuring Element

Morphological Processing Example



Morphological Algorithms

Using the simple technique we have looked at so far we can begin to consider some more interesting morphological algorithms

We will look at:

- **Boundary extraction**
- **Region filling**

There are lots of others as well though:

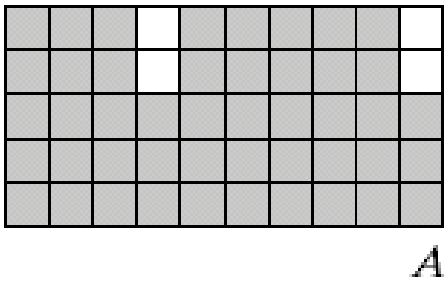
- Extraction of connected components
- Thinning/thickening
- Skeletonisation

Boundary Extraction

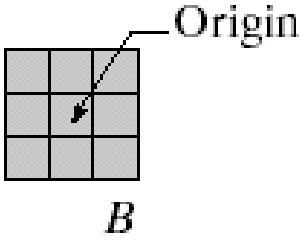
Extracting the boundary (or outline) of an object is often extremely useful

The boundary can be given simply as

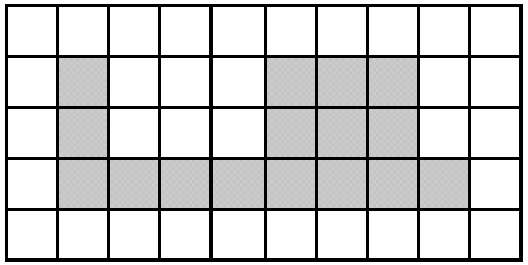
$$\beta(A) = A - (A \ominus B)$$



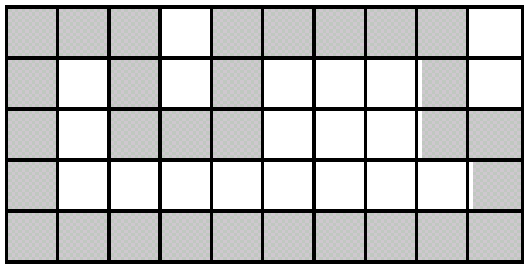
A



B



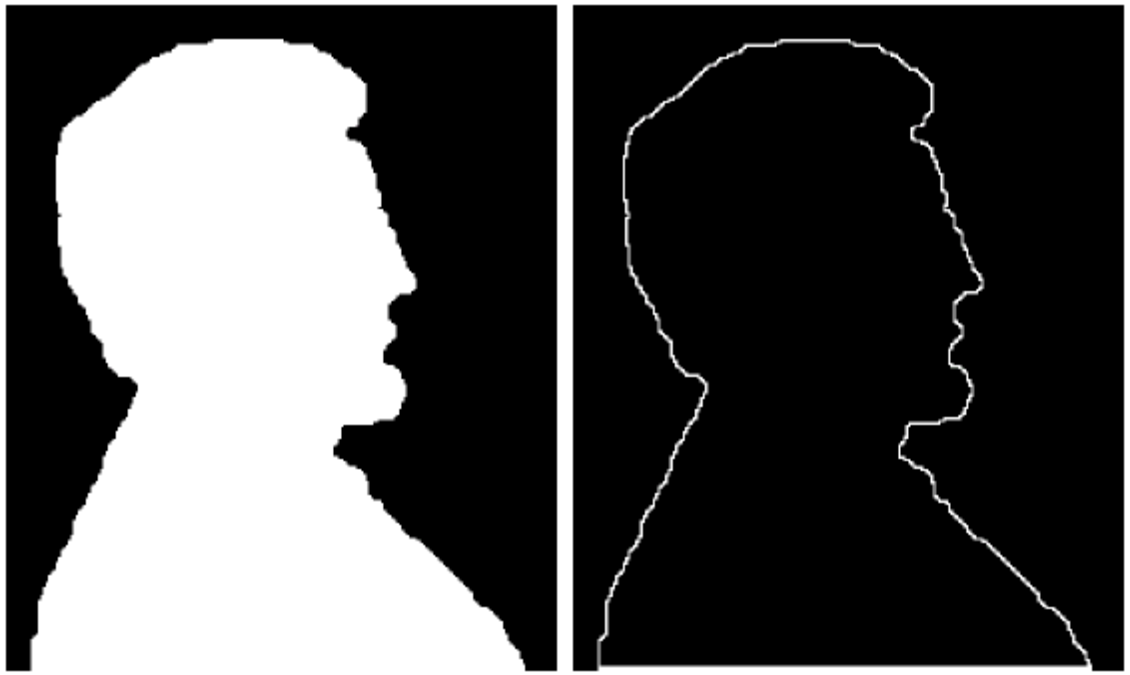
$A \ominus B$



$\beta(A)$

Boundary Extraction Example

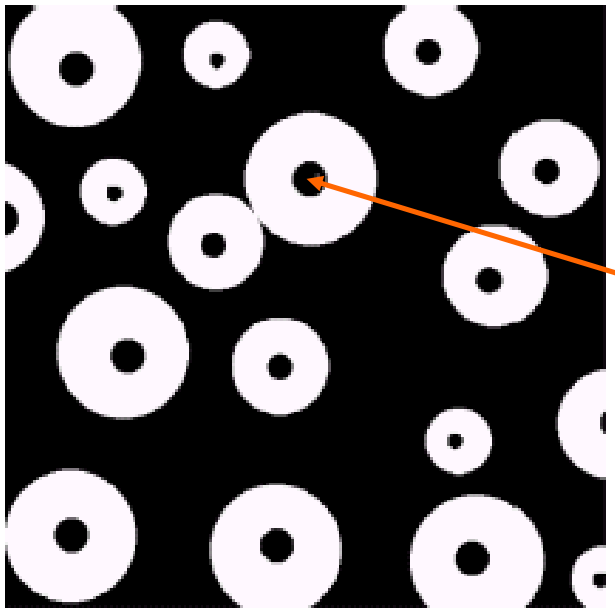
A simple image and the result of performing boundary extraction using a square 3*3 structuring element



Original Image Extracted Boundary

Region Filling

Given a pixel inside a boundary, *region filling* attempts to fill that boundary with object pixels (1s)



Given a point inside here, can we fill the whole circle?

Region Filling (cont…)

The key equation for region filling is

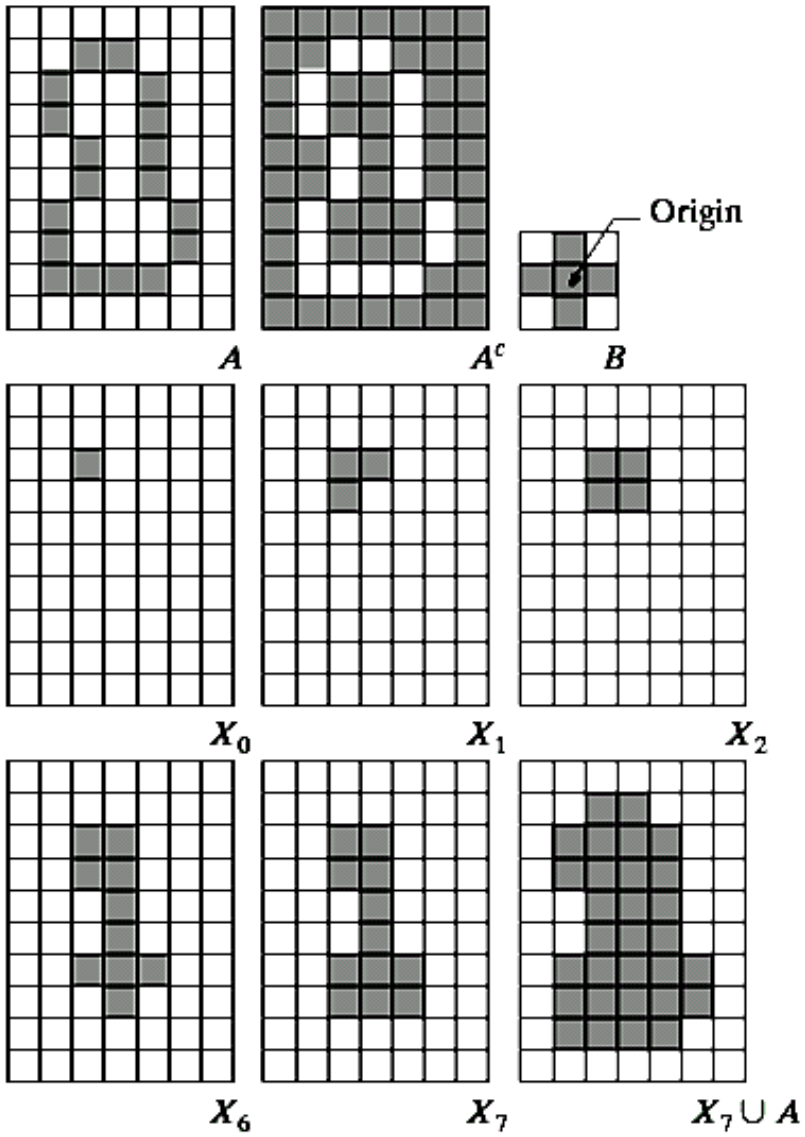
$$X_k = (X_{k-1} \oplus B) \cap A^c \qquad k = 1,2,3.....$$

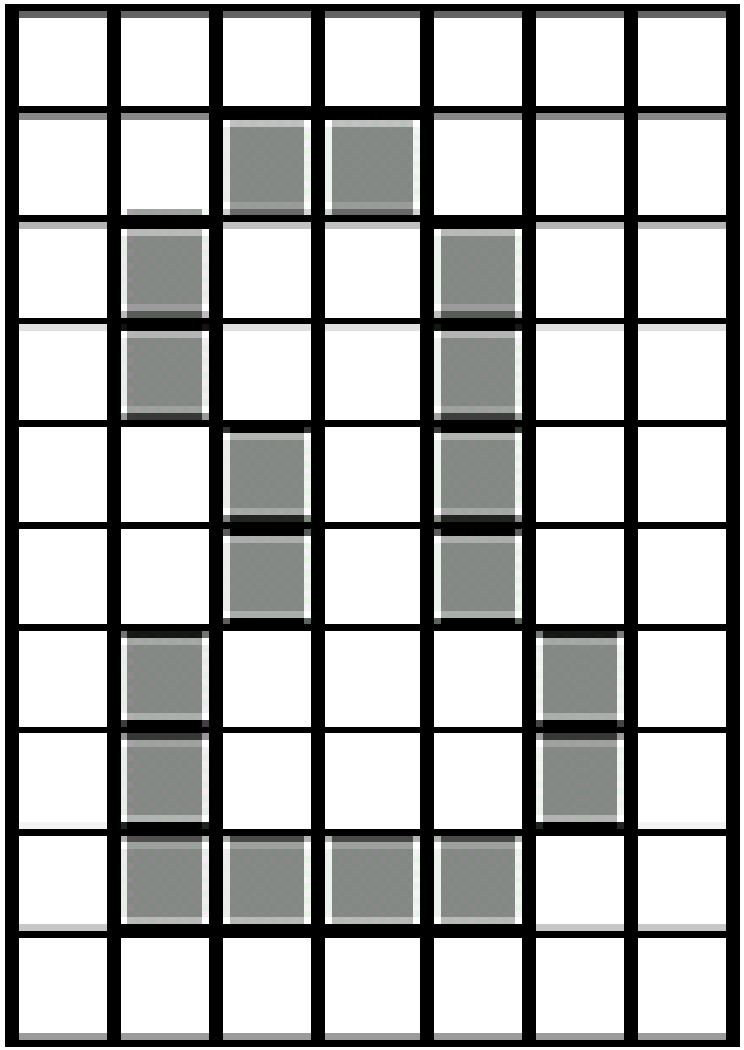
Where X_0 is simply the starting point inside the boundary, B is a simple structuring element and A^c is the complement of A

This equation is applied repeatedly until X_k is equal to X_{k-1}

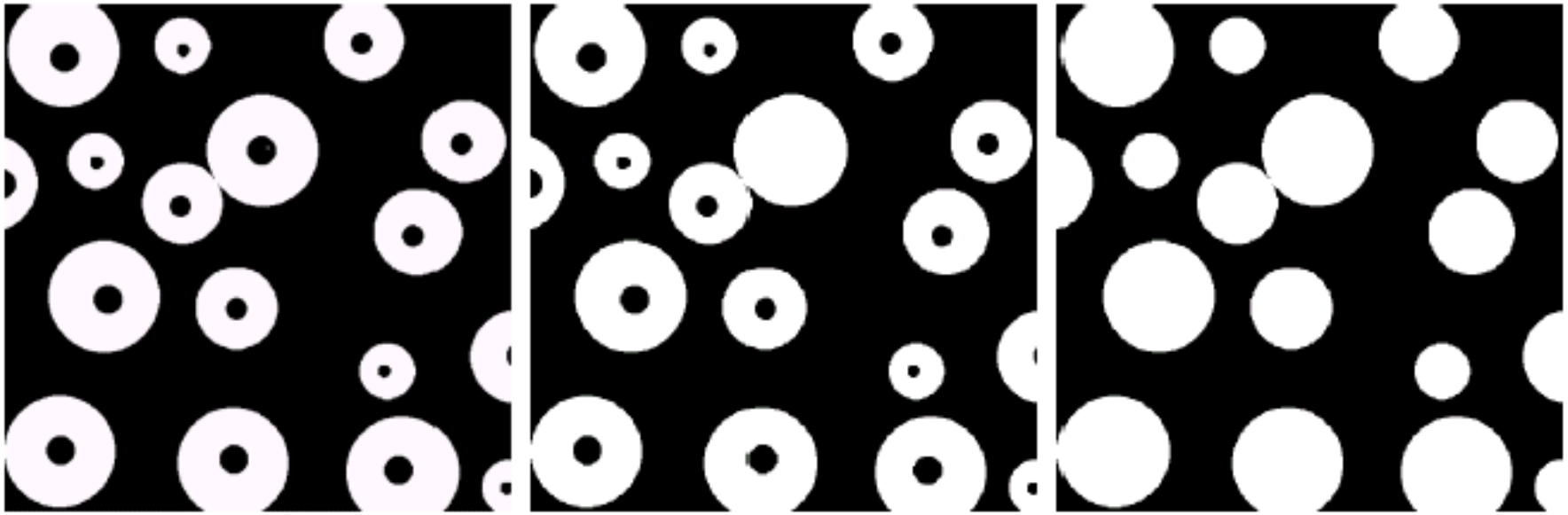
Finally the result is unioned with the original boundary

Region Filling Step By Step





Region Filling Example



Original Image

One Region Filled

All Regions Filled

Images taken from Gonzalez & Woods, Digital Image Processing (2002)

Summary

The purpose of morphological processing is primarily to remove imperfections added during segmentation

The basic operations are *erosion* and *dilation*

Using the basic operations we can perform *opening* and *closing*

More advanced morphological operation can then be implemented using combinations of all of these

The End