

Let I denote the image and M denote the mean filter. Applying the mean is equivalent to a convolution between image I and filter M .

$$f_1 = M * I \quad (1)$$

Now, we apply the filter again, leading to another convolution

$$f_2 = M * (M * I) \quad (2)$$

$$= (M * M) * I \quad (\text{associativity of convolution}) \quad (3)$$

$$(4)$$

Hence, f_k is given by

$$f_k = M * f_{k-1} \quad (5)$$

$$= M * (\underbrace{M * M \cdots M}_{k-1 \text{ } M\text{'s}} * I) \quad (6)$$

$$f_k = (\underbrace{M * M \cdots M}_{k \text{ } M\text{'s}}) * I \quad (7)$$

$$\text{Now, let } N = \underbrace{M * M \cdots M}_{k \text{ } M\text{'s}} \Rightarrow f_k = N * I \quad (8)$$

Thus, N is a filter that gives the same result when applied to I as a mean filter when applied to I , k times.

Note that if k is large enough, we can apply the Central Limit Theorem which states that if you have a bunch of distributions f_i and you convolve them all together into a distribution $F := f_1 * f_2 * f_3 * \cdots * f_k$, then the larger k is, the more F will resemble a Gaussian distribution. Hence in the limit, the above equation is equivalent to convolving the the initial distribution with a Gaussian.

$$\lim_{k \rightarrow \infty} f_k = I * \mathcal{G} \quad (9)$$