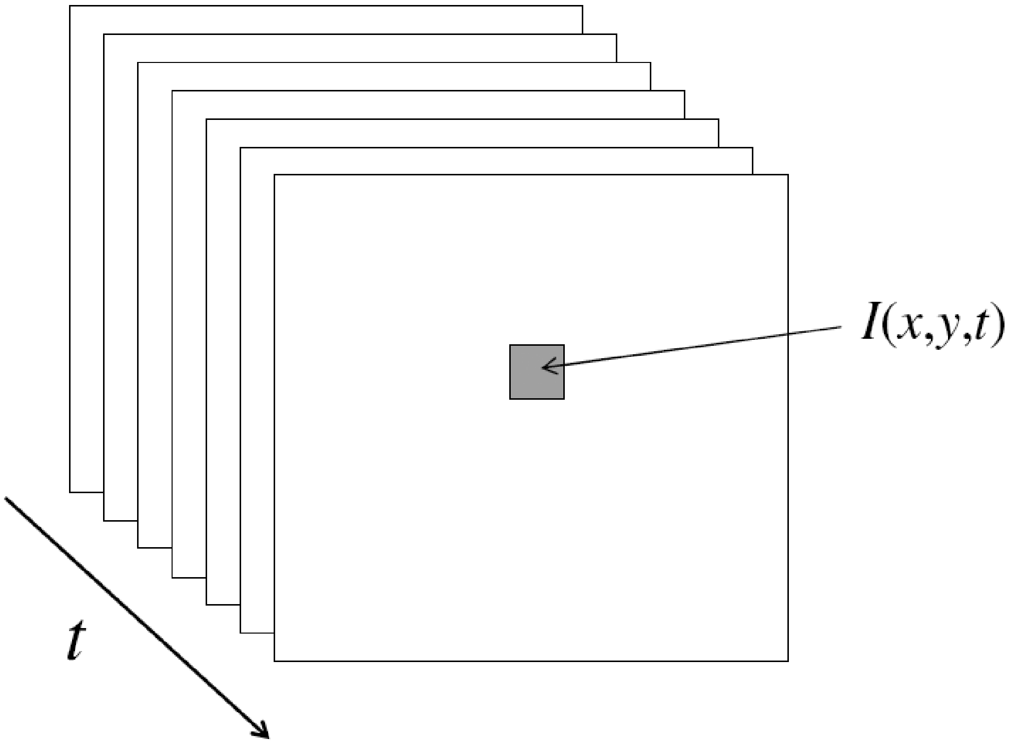
Optical Flow Estimation

Jianping Fan
Department of Computer Science
UNC-Charlotte

Course Website:
http://webpages.uncc.edu/jfan/itcs5152.html

Video

- A video is a sequence of frames captured over time
- Now our image data is a function of space (x, y) and time (t)

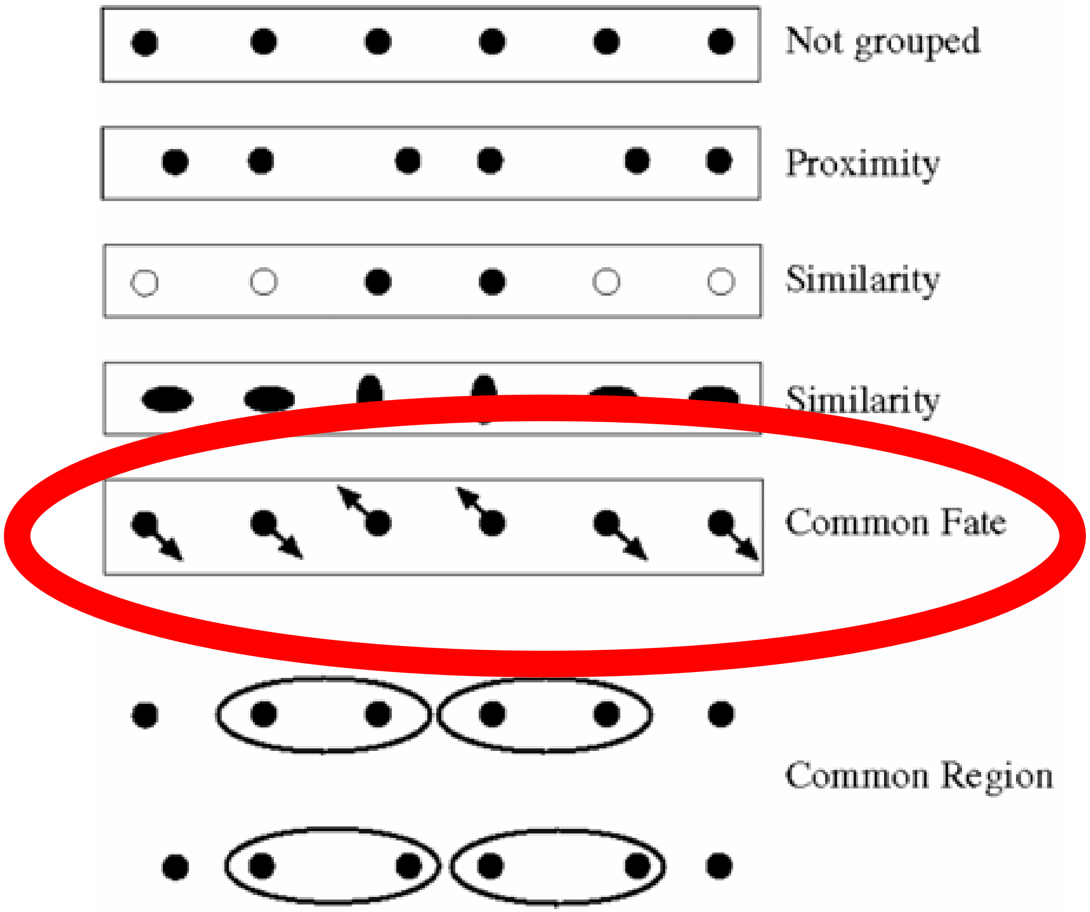


Motion and perceptual organization

Gestalt psychology
(Max Wertheimer,
1880-1943)

Motion and perceptual organization

- Sometimes, motion is the only cue



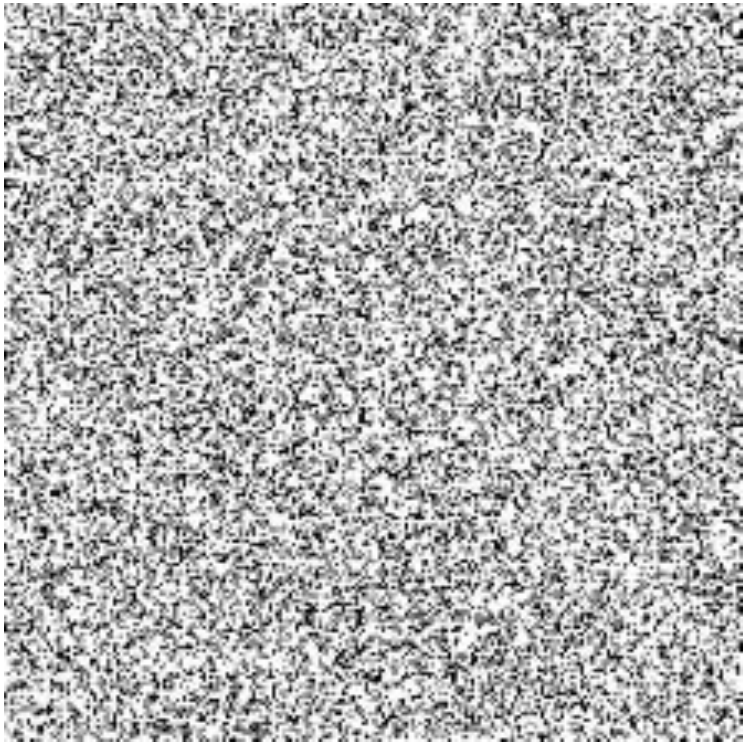
Gestalt psychology (Max Wertheimer, 1880-1943)

Motion and perceptual organization

- Sometimes, motion is the only cue

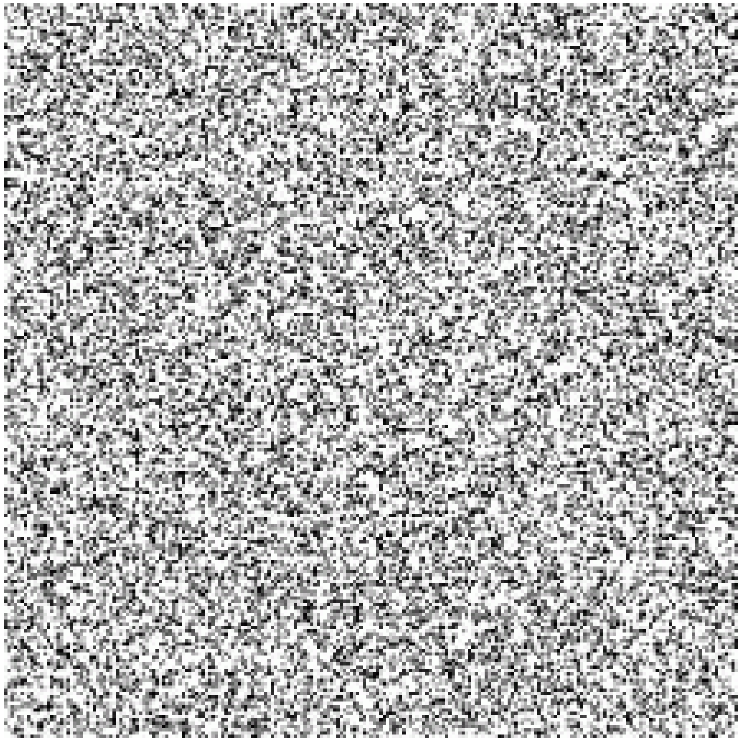
Motion and perceptual organization

- Sometimes, motion is the only cue



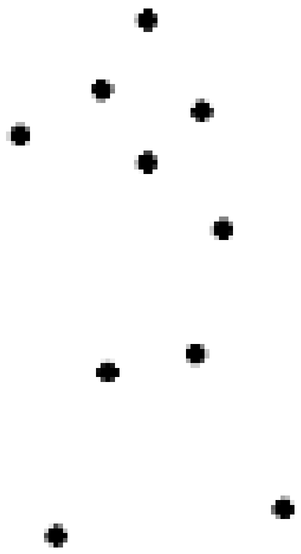
Motion and perceptual organization

- Sometimes, motion is the only cue



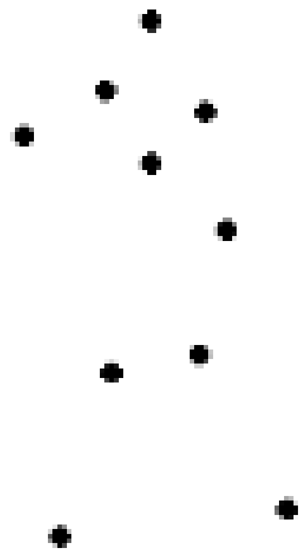
Motion and perceptual organization

- Even “impoverished” motion data can evoke a strong percept

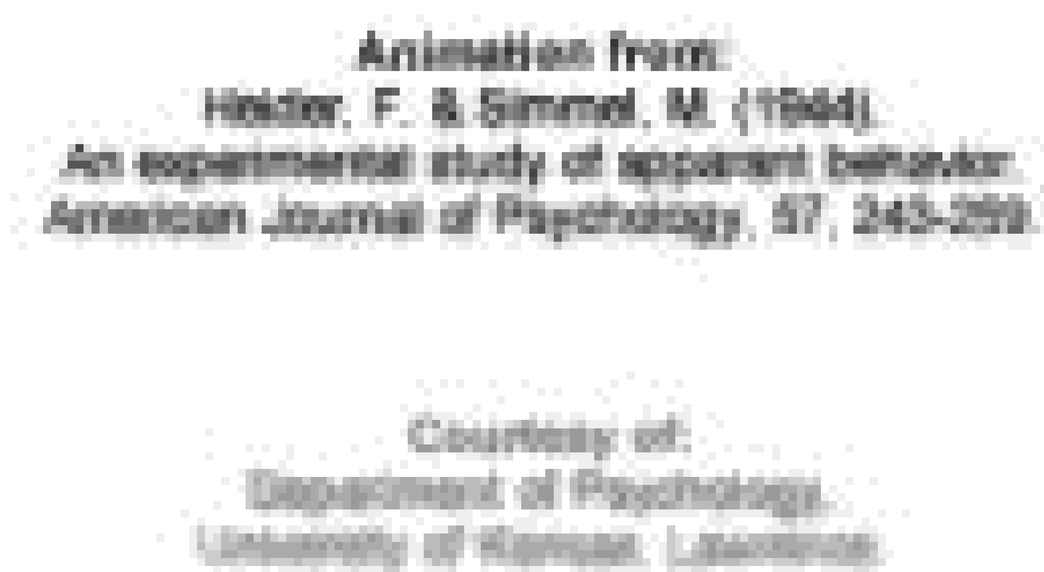


Motion and perceptual organization

- Even “impoverished” motion data can evoke a strong percept



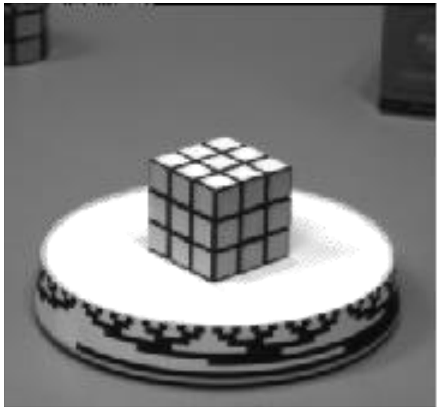
Motion and perceptual organization

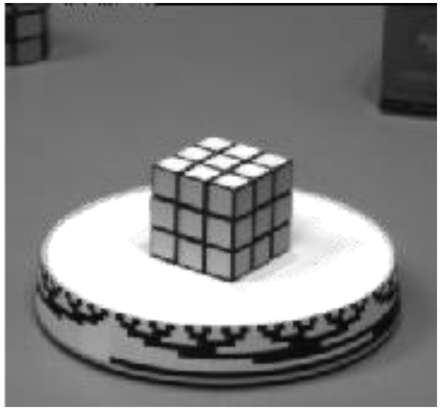


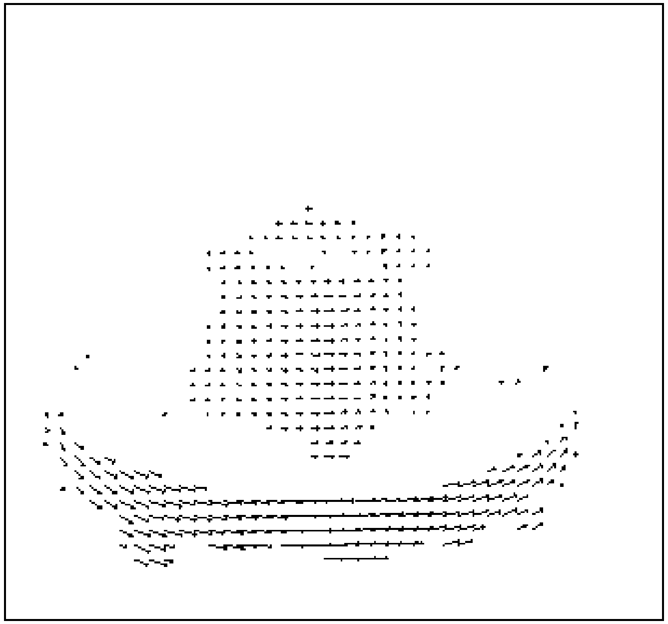
Experimental study of apparent behavior.
Fritz Heider & Marianne Simmel. 1944

Motion estimation: Optical flow

Optic flow is the **apparent** motion of objects or surfaces

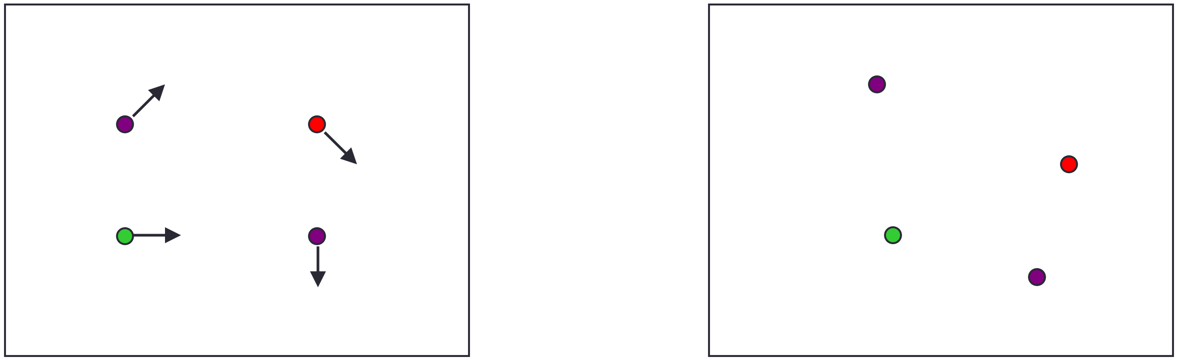






Will start by estimating motion of each pixel separately
Then will consider motion of entire image

Problem definition: optical flow



$$I(x, y, t) \qquad I(x, y, t+1)$$

How to estimate pixel motion from image *I(x,y,t)* to *I(x,y,t+1)* ?

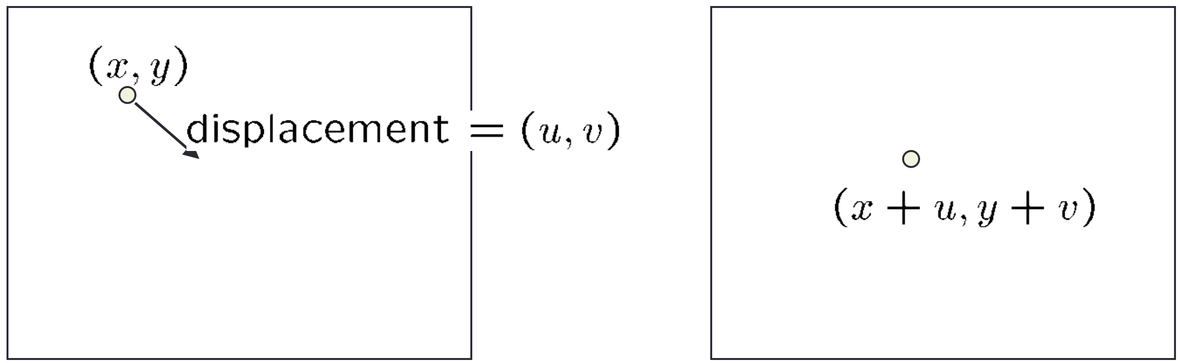
- Solve pixel correspondence problem
  - given a pixel in I(x,y,t), look for nearby pixels of the same color in *I(x,y,t+1)*

Key assumptions

- color constancy: a point in *I(x,y,t)* looks the same in I(x,y,t+1)
  - For grayscale images, this is brightness constancy
- small motion: points do not move very far

This is called the optical flow problem

Optical flow constraints (grayscale images)



$I(x, y, t)$ $\qquad$ $I(x, y, t+1)$

- Let's look at these constraints more closely
  - brightness constancy constraint (equation)

$$I(x, y, t) = I(x+u, y+v, t+1)$$

  - small motion: (u and v are less than 1 pixel, or smooth)

    Taylor series expansion of I:

$$I(x+u, y+v) = I(x, y) + \frac{\partial I}{\partial x} u + \frac{\partial I}{\partial y} v + [\text{higher order terms}]$$

$$\approx I(x, y) + \frac{\partial I}{\partial x} u + \frac{\partial I}{\partial y} v$$

Optical flow equation

- Combining these two equations

$$
\begin{aligned}
0 &= I(x+u, y+v, t+1) - I(x, y, t) \\
&\approx I(x, y, t+1) + I_x u + I_y v - I(x, y, t)
\end{aligned}
$$

(Short hand: $I_x = \frac{\partial I}{\partial x}$ for t **or** $t+1$)

Optical flow equation

- Combining these two equations

$$
\begin{aligned}
0 &= I(x+u, y+v, t+1) - I(x, y, t) \\
&\approx I(x, y, t+1) + I_x u + I_y v - I(x, y, t) \\
&\approx [I(x, y, t+1) - I(x, y, t)] + I_x u + I_y v \\
&\approx I_t + I_x u + I_y v \\
&\approx I_t + \nabla I \cdot \langle u, v \rangle
\end{aligned}
$$

(Short hand: $I_x = \frac{\partial I}{\partial x}$ for t **or** $t+1$)

Optical flow equation

- Combining these two equations

$$
\begin{aligned}
0 &= I(x+u, y+v, t+1) - I(x, y, t) \\
&\approx I(x, y, t+1) + I_x u + I_y v - I(x, y, t) \\
&\approx [I(x, y, t+1) - I(x, y, t)] + I_x u + I_y v \\
&\approx I_t + I_x u + I_y v \\
&\approx I_t + \nabla I \cdot \langle u, v \rangle
\end{aligned}
$$

(Short hand: $I_x = \frac{\partial I}{\partial x}$ for t **or** $t+1$)

In the limit as u and v go to zero, this becomes exact

$$0 = I_t + \nabla I \cdot \langle u, v \rangle$$

Brightness constancy constraint equation

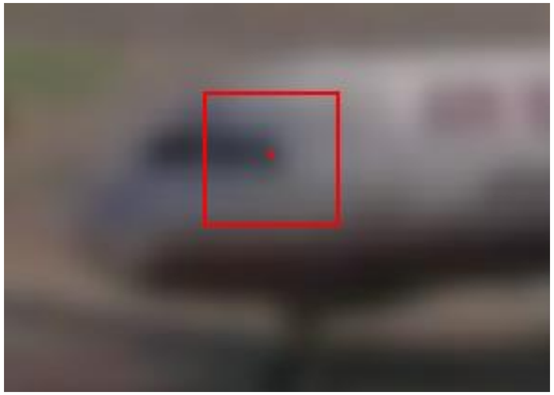
$$I_x u + I_y v + I_t = 0$$

How does this make sense?

Brightness constancy constraint equation

$$I_x u + I_y v + I_t = 0$$

- What do the static image gradients have to do with motion estimation?



The brightness constancy constraint

Can we use this equation to recover image motion (u,v) at each pixel?

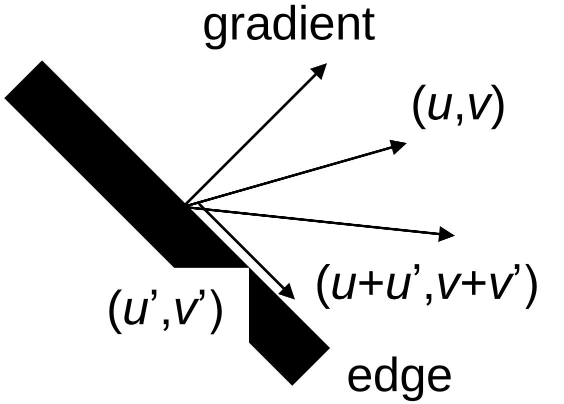
$$0 = I_t + \nabla I \cdot < u, v > \quad \text{or} \quad I_x u + I_y v + I_t = 0$$

- How many equations and unknowns per pixel?
  - One equation (this is a scalar equation!), two unknowns (u,v)

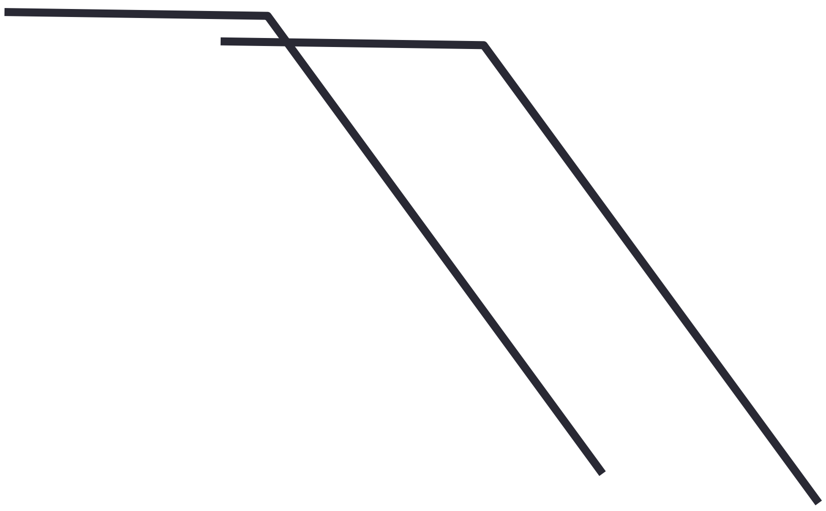
The component of the motion perpendicular to the gradient (i.e., parallel to the edge) cannot be measured

If (*u*, *v*) satisfies the equation, so does (*u+u'*, *v+v'*) if

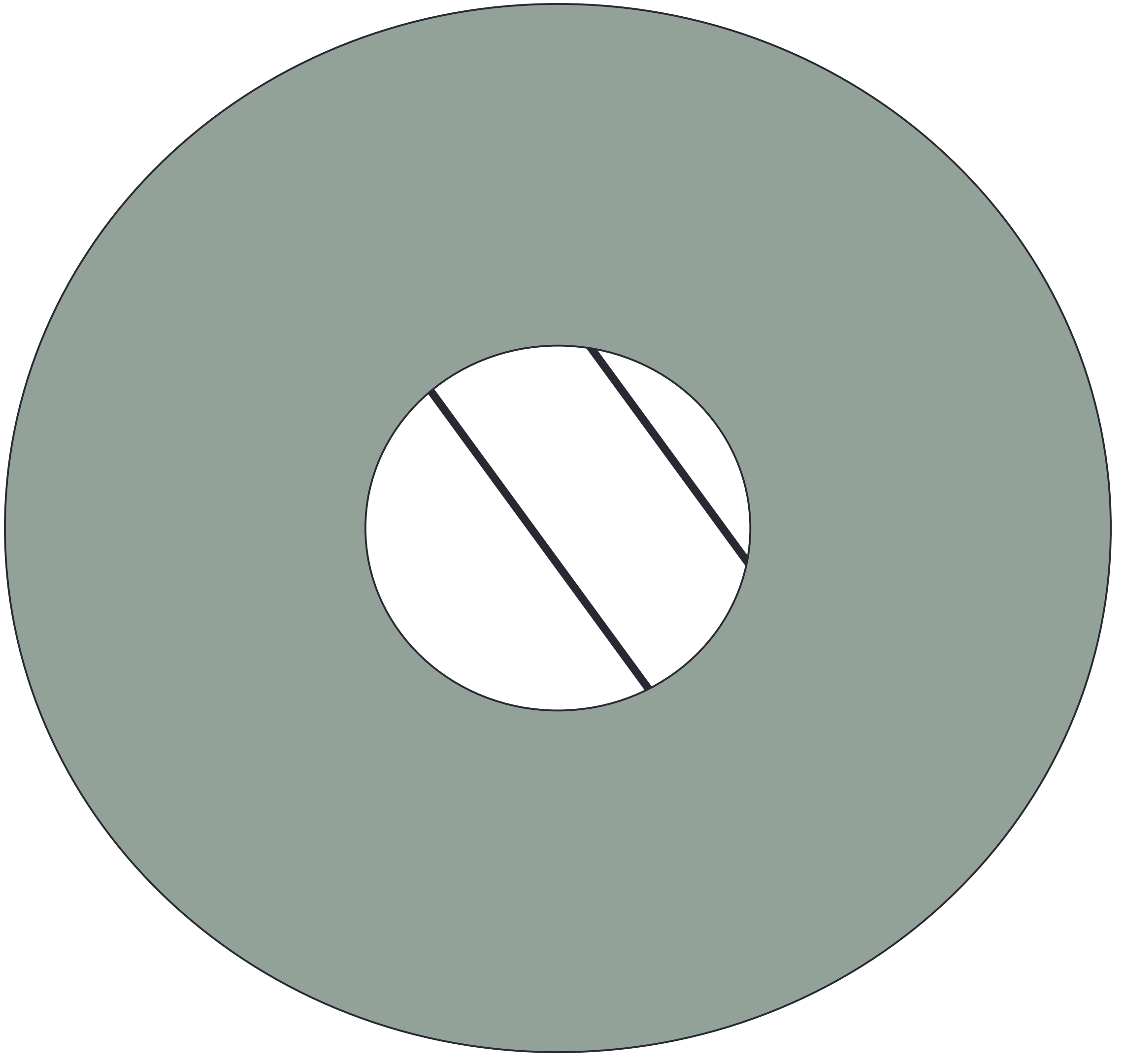
$$\nabla \mathrm{I} \cdot \begin{bmatrix} \mathrm{u'} & \mathrm{v'} \end{bmatrix}^{\mathrm{T}} = 0$$



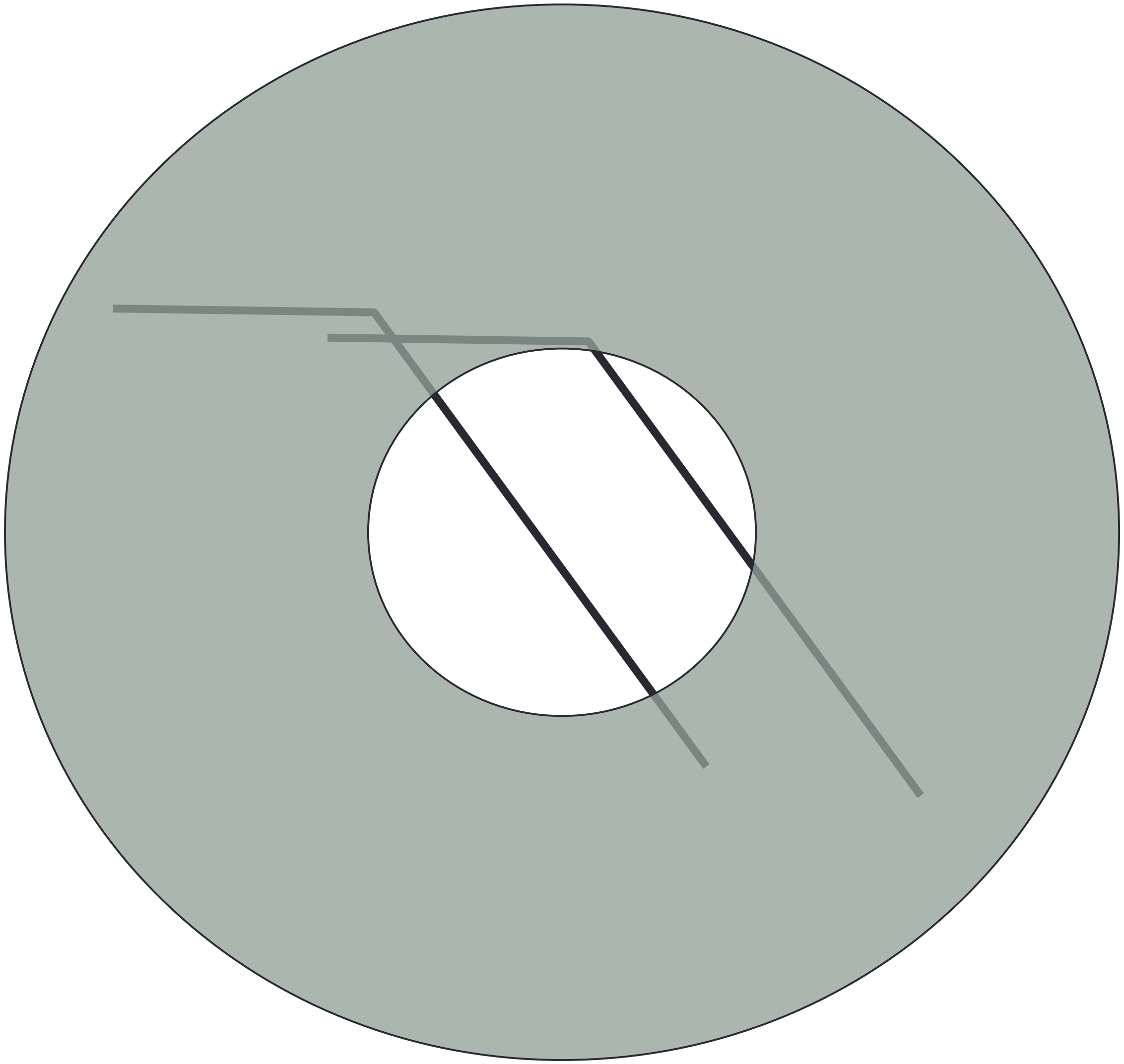
Aperture problem



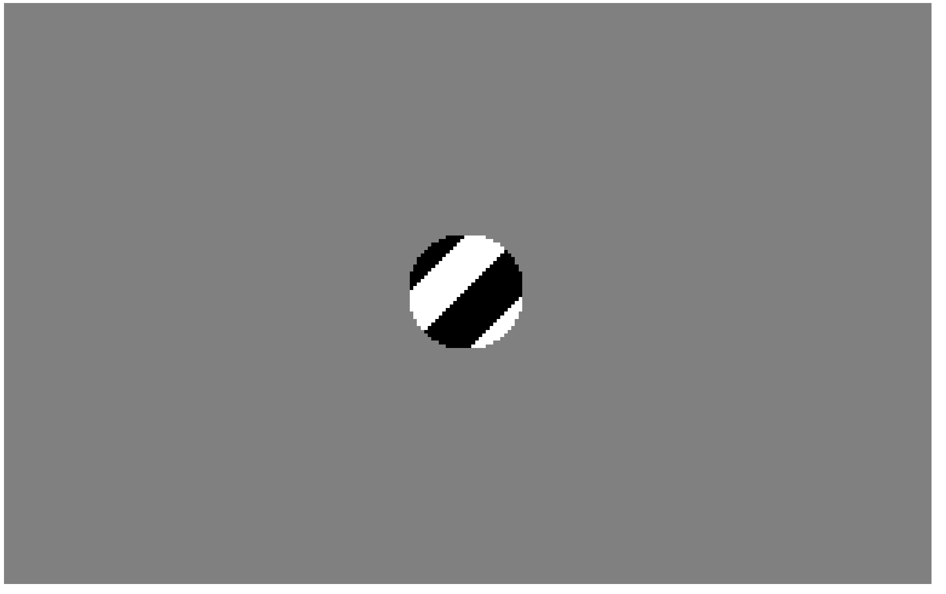
Aperture problem



Aperture problem

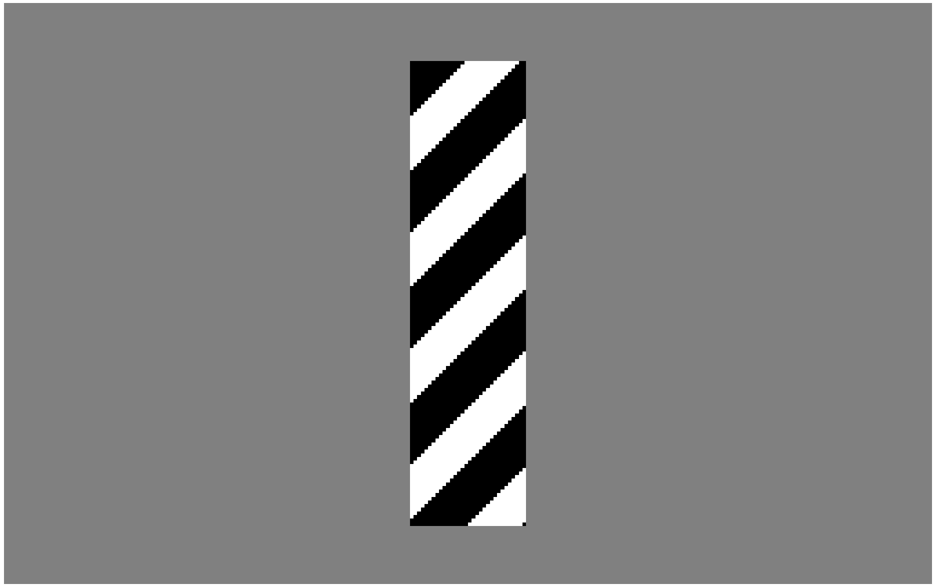


The barber pole illusion



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barberpole_illusion

The barber pole illusion



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barberpole_illusion

Solving the ambiguity…

B. Lucas and T. Kanade. An iterative image registration technique with an application to stereo vision. In *Proceedings of the International Joint Conference on Artificial Intelligence*, pp. 674–679, 1981.

- How to get more equations for a pixel?
- **Spatial coherence constraint**
- Assume the pixel's neighbors have the same (u,v)
  - If we use a 5x5 window, that gives us 25 equations per pixel

$$0 = I_t(\mathbf{p_i}) + \nabla I(\mathbf{p_i}) \cdot [u \;\; v]$$

$$\begin{bmatrix} I_x(\mathbf{p_1}) & I_y(\mathbf{p_1}) \\ I_x(\mathbf{p_2}) & I_y(\mathbf{p_2}) \\ \vdots & \vdots \\ I_x(\mathbf{p_{25}}) & I_y(\mathbf{p_{25}}) \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} u \\ v \end{bmatrix} = - \begin{bmatrix} I_t(\mathbf{p_1}) \\ I_t(\mathbf{p_2}) \\ \vdots \\ I_t(\mathbf{p_{25}}) \end{bmatrix}$$

Solving the ambiguity…

- Least squares problem:

$$\begin{bmatrix} I_x(\mathbf{p_1}) & I_y(\mathbf{p_1}) \\ I_x(\mathbf{p_2}) & I_y(\mathbf{p_2}) \\ \vdots & \vdots \\ I_x(\mathbf{p_{25}}) & I_y(\mathbf{p_{25}}) \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} u \\ v \end{bmatrix} = - \begin{bmatrix} I_t(\mathbf{p_1}) \\ I_t(\mathbf{p_2}) \\ \vdots \\ I_t(\mathbf{p_{25}}) \end{bmatrix}$$

$$\underset{25\text{x}2}{A} \; \underset{2\text{x}1}{d} = \underset{25\text{x}1}{b}$$

Matching patches across images

- Overconstrained linear system

$$\begin{bmatrix} I_x(\mathbf{p}_1) & I_y(\mathbf{p}_1) \\ I_x(\mathbf{p}_2) & I_y(\mathbf{p}_2) \\ \vdots & \vdots \\ I_x(\mathbf{p}_{25}) & I_y(\mathbf{p}_{25}) \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} u \\ v \end{bmatrix} = - \begin{bmatrix} I_t(\mathbf{p}_1) \\ I_t(\mathbf{p}_2) \\ \vdots \\ I_t(\mathbf{p}_{25}) \end{bmatrix} \qquad \underset{25\text{x}2}{A} \; \underset{2\text{x}1}{d} = \underset{25\text{x}1}{b}$$

Least squares solution for *d* given by $(A^T A)\ d = A^T b$

$$\underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} \sum I_x I_x & \sum I_x I_y \\ \sum I_x I_y & \sum I_y I_y \end{bmatrix}}_{A^T A} \begin{bmatrix} u \\ v \end{bmatrix} = - \underbrace{\begin{bmatrix} \sum I_x I_t \\ \sum I_y I_t \end{bmatrix}}_{A^T b}$$

The summations are over all pixels in the K x K window

Conditions for solvability

Optimal (u, v) satisfies Lucas-Kanade equation

$$\begin{bmatrix} \sum I_x I_x & \sum I_x I_y \\ \sum I_x I_y & \sum I_y I_y \end{bmatrix} \begin{bmatrix} u \\ v \end{bmatrix} = - \begin{bmatrix} \sum I_x I_t \\ \sum I_y I_t \end{bmatrix}$$

$$A^T A \qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad A^T b$$

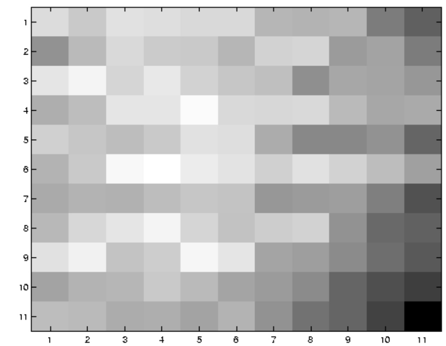
When is this solvable? I.e., what are good points to track?

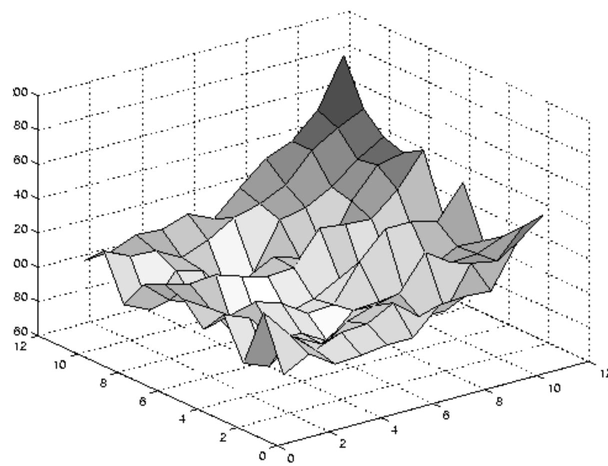
- **$A^T A$** should be invertible
- **$A^T A$** should not be too small due to noise
  - eigenvalues λ_1 and λ_2 of **$A^T A$** should not be too small
- **$A^T A$** should be well-conditioned
  - λ_1 / λ_2 should not be too large (λ_1 = larger eigenvalue)

Does this remind you of anything?

Criteria for Harris corner detector

Low texture region



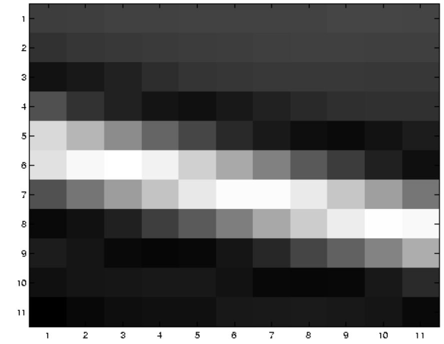


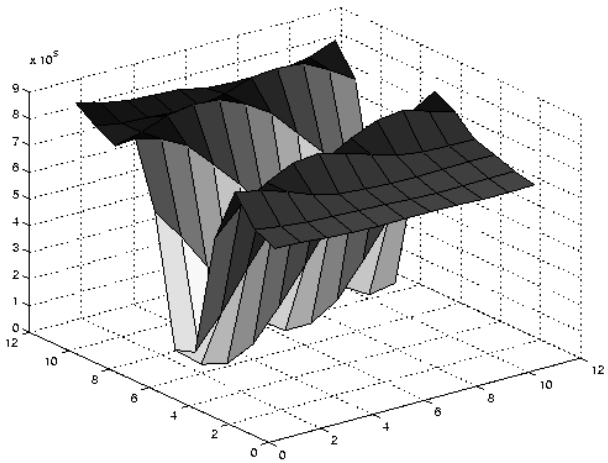
$$\sum \nabla I (\nabla I)^T$$

– gradients have small magnitude

– small λ_1, small λ_2

Edge



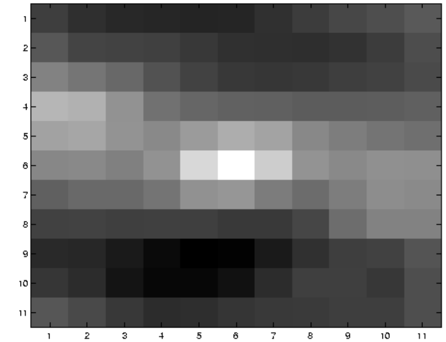


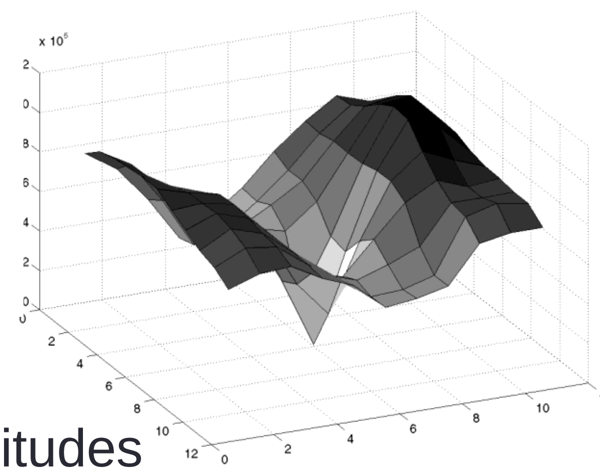
$$\sum \nabla I (\nabla I)^T$$

– large gradients, all the same

– large λ_1, small λ_2

High textured region



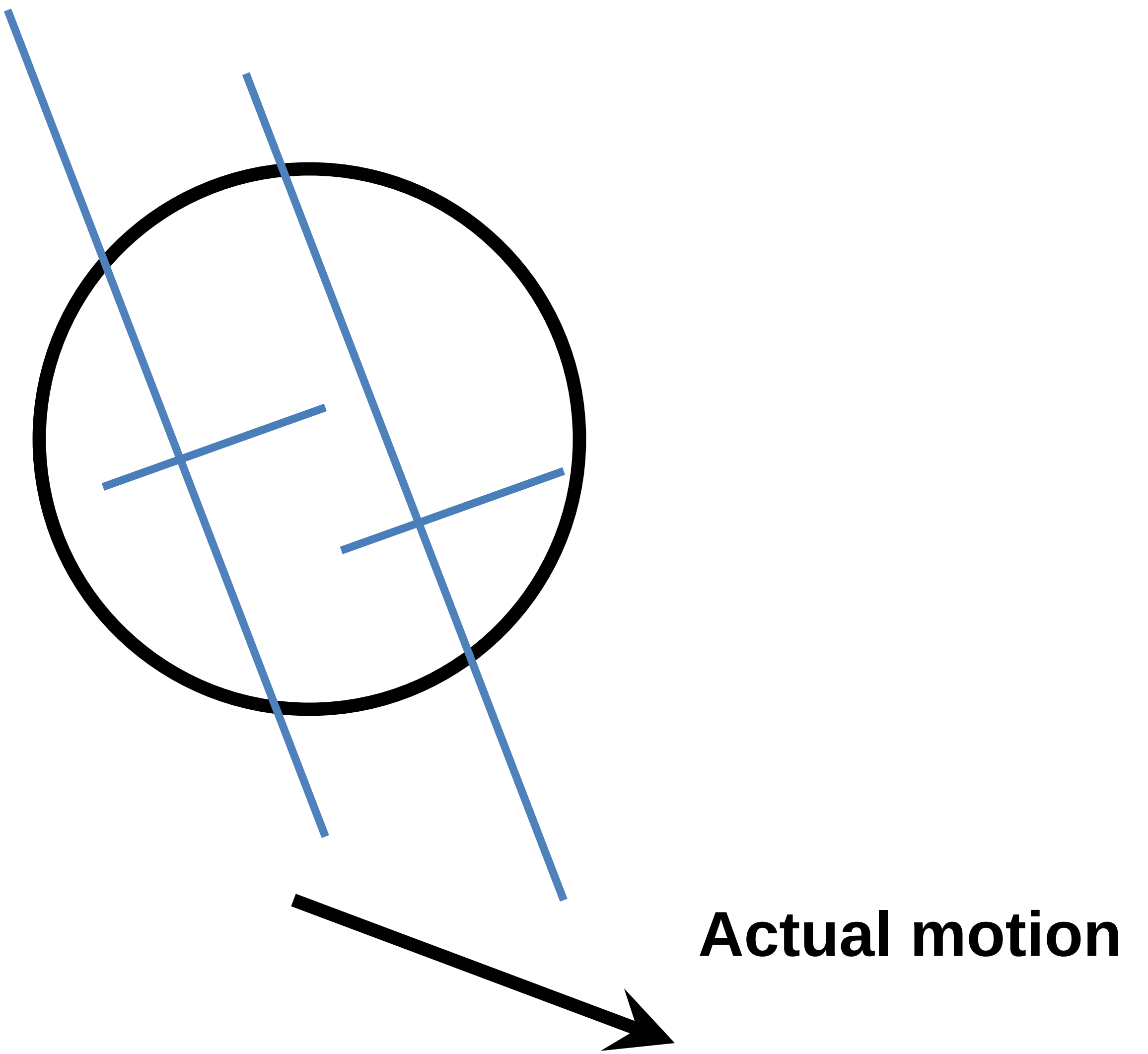


$$\sum \nabla I (\nabla I)^T$$

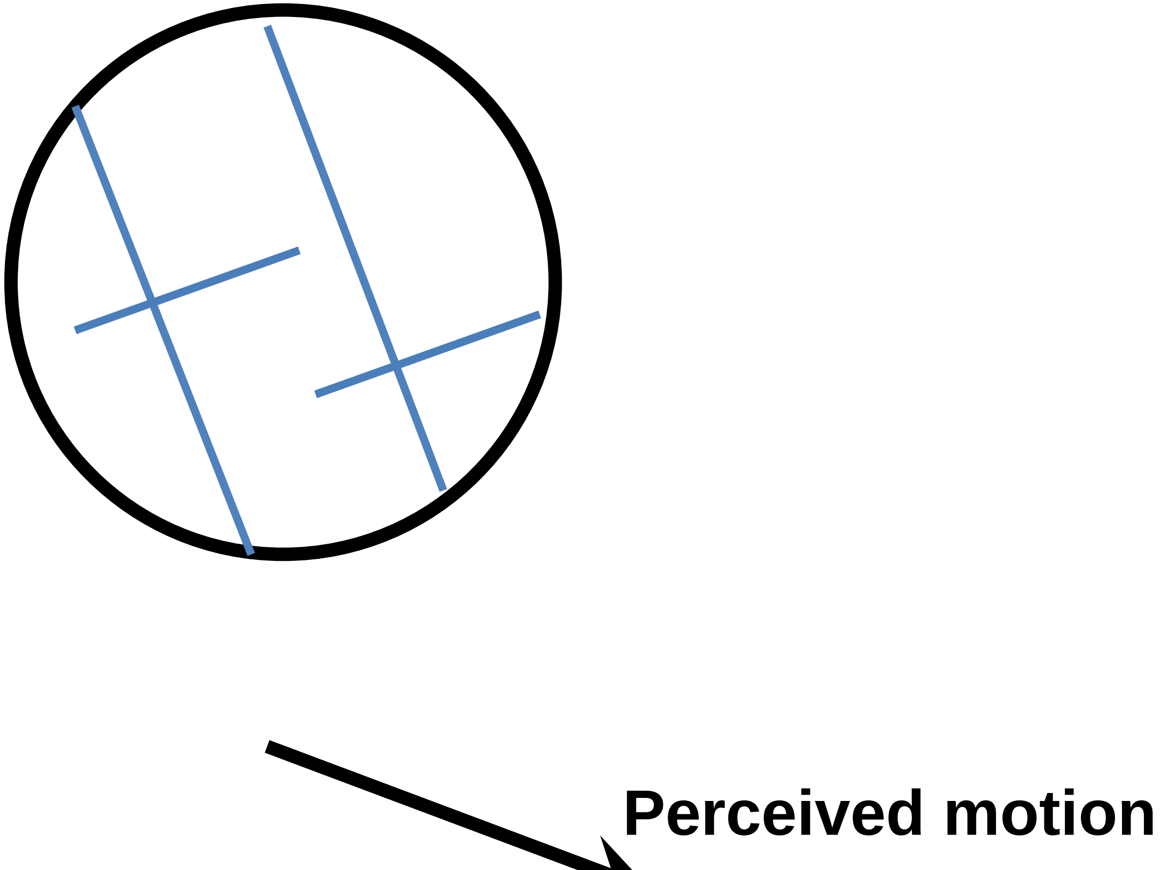
– gradients are different, large magnitudes

– large λ_1, large λ_2

The aperture problem resolved



The aperture problem resolved



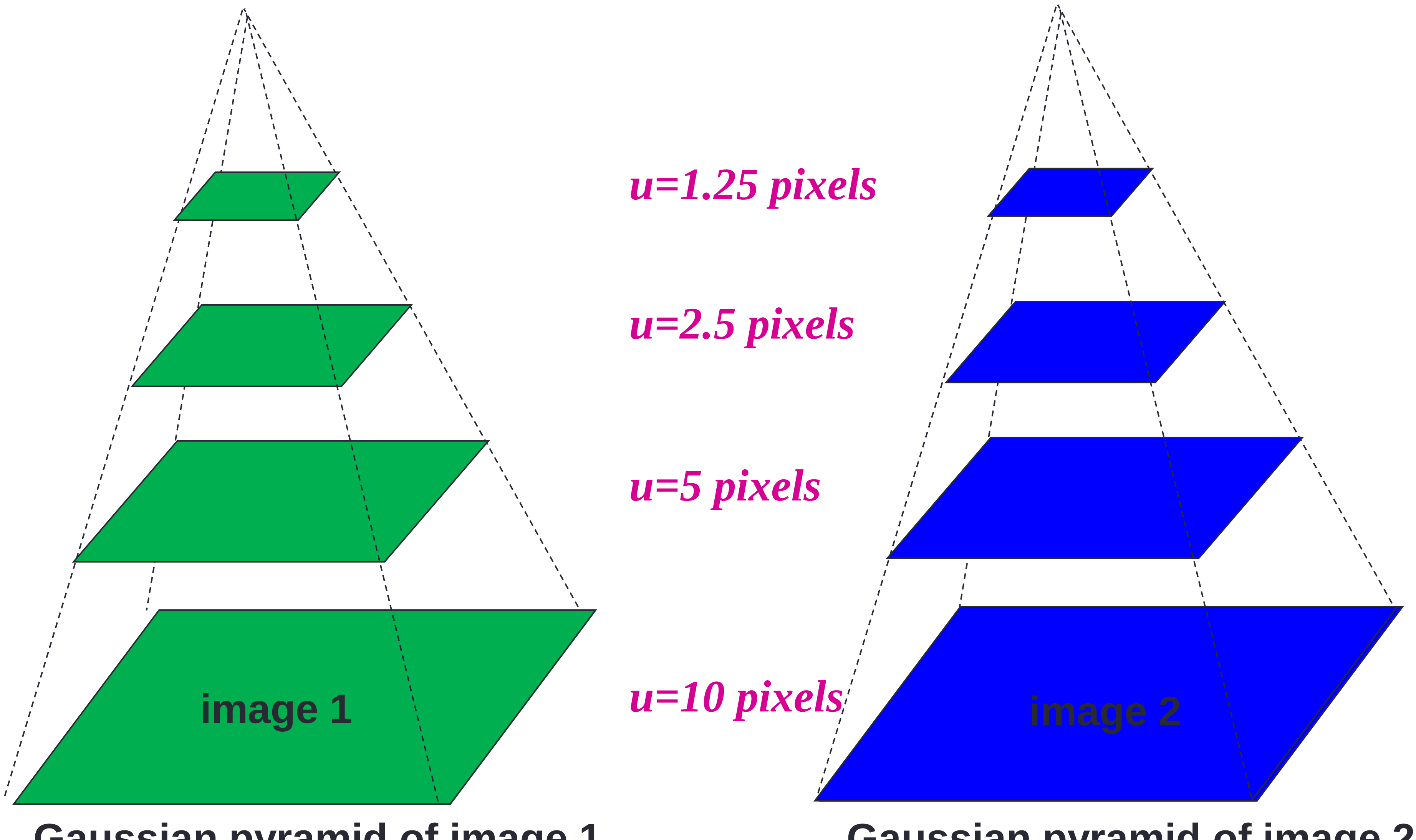
Errors in Lucas-Kanade

- A point does not move like its neighbors
  - Motion segmentation
- Brightness constancy does not hold
  - Do exhaustive neighborhood search with normalized correlation - tracking features – maybe SIFT – more later….
- The motion is large (larger than a pixel)
  1. Not-linear: Iterative refinement
  2. Local minima: coarse-to-fine estimation

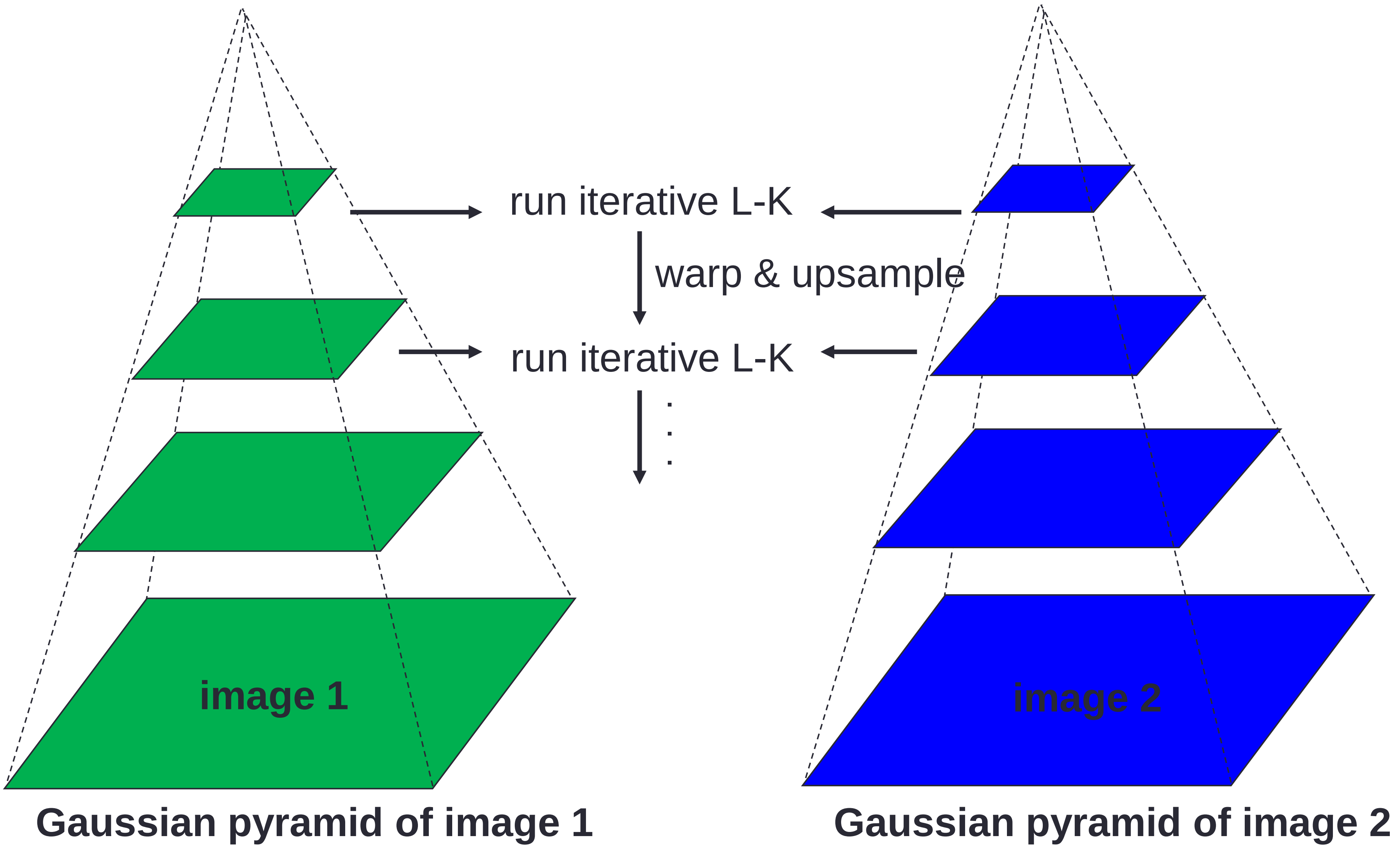
Revisiting the small motion assumption

- Is this motion small enough?
  - Probably not—it's much larger than one pixel
  - How might we solve this problem?

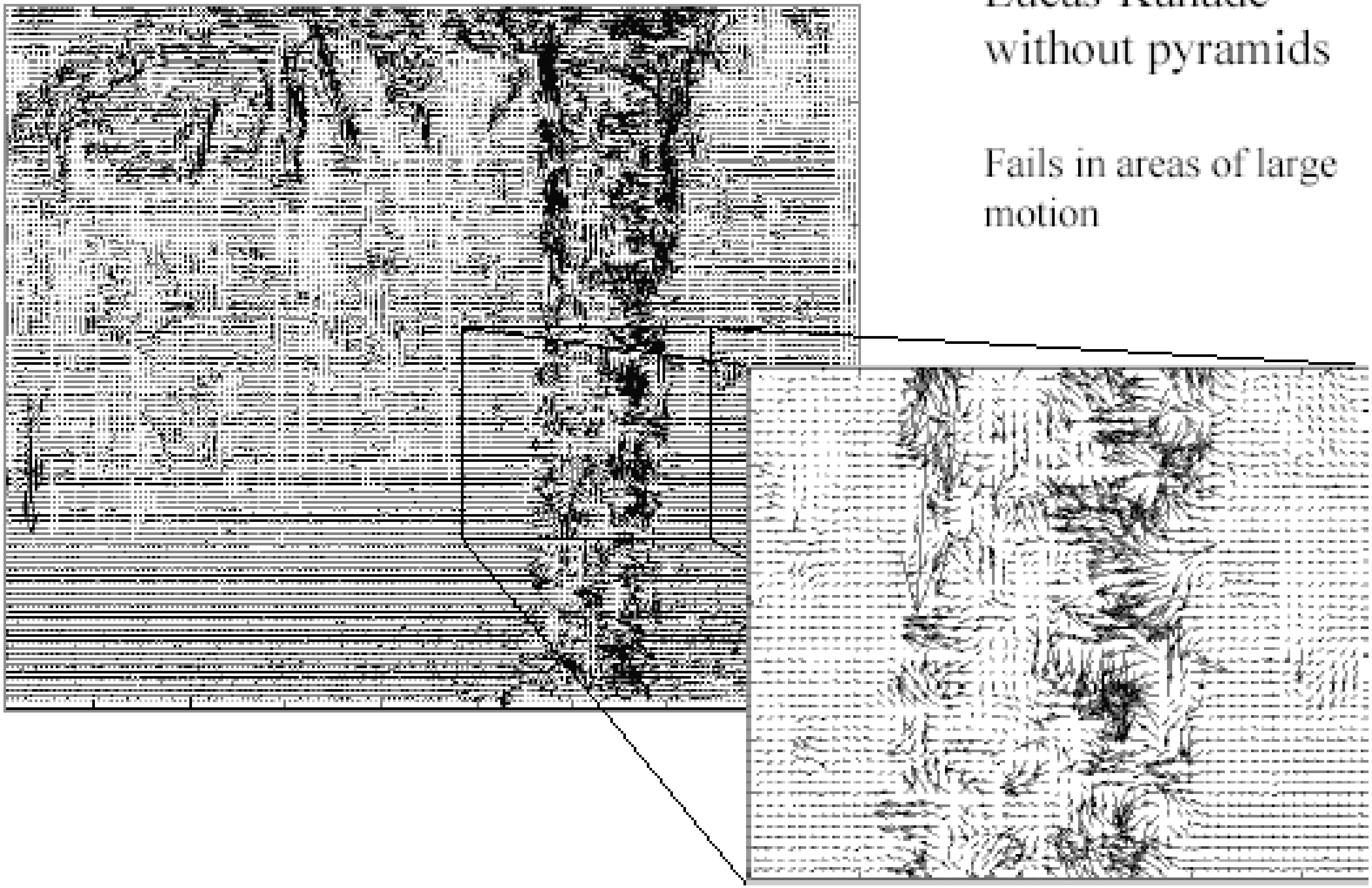
Coarse-to-fine optical flow estimation



Coarse-to-fine optical flow estimation



Optical Flow Results

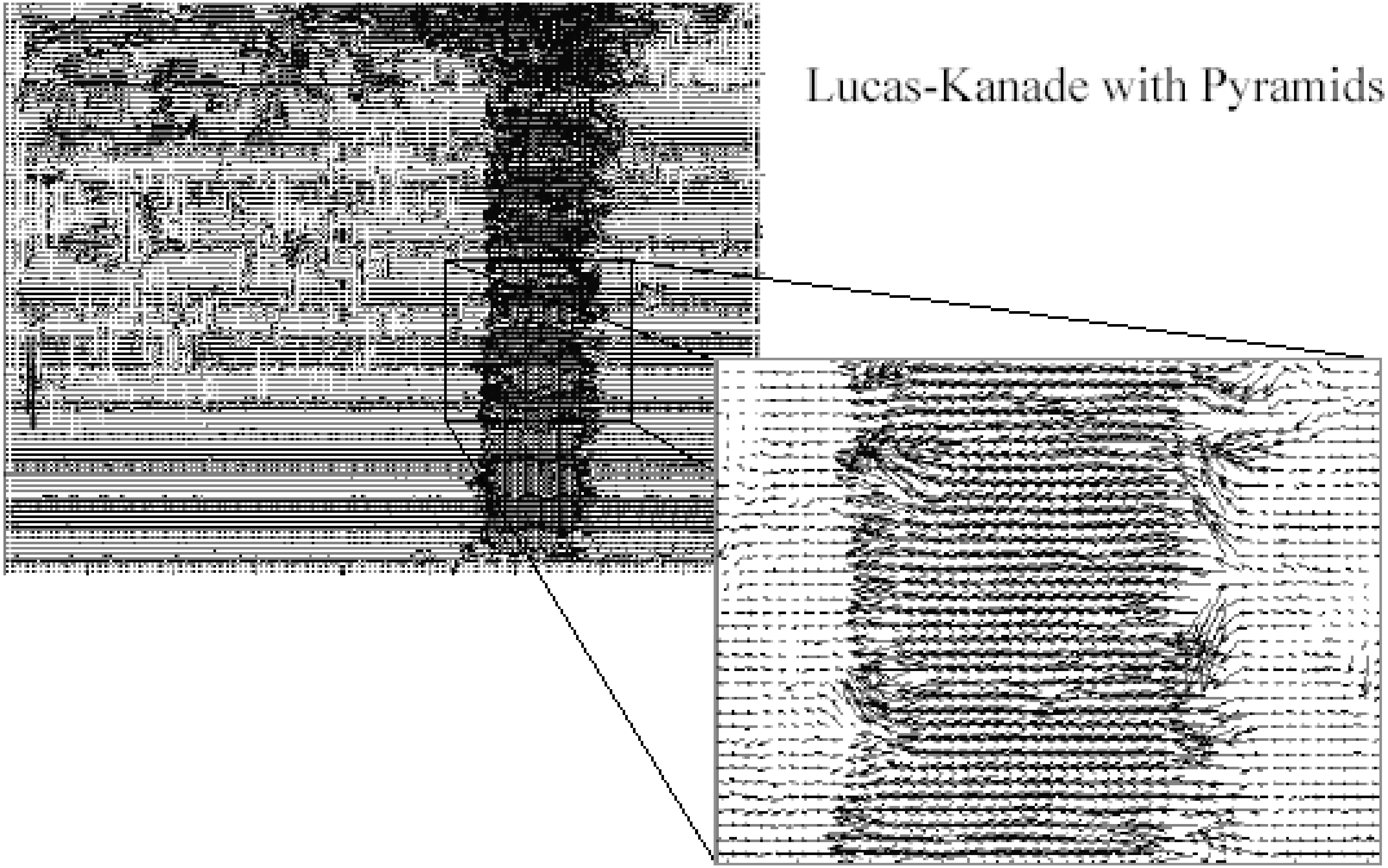


Lucas-Kanade without pyramids

Fails in areas of large motion

* From Khurram Hassan-Shafique CAP5415 Computer Vision 2003

Optical Flow Results



Lucas-Kanade with Pyramids

* From Khurram Hassan-Shafique CAP5415 Computer Vision 2003