I have two comments on Moeng and Arakawa (1980, hereafter MA80), who have modeled the downstream evolution of a stratocumulus-topped mixed layer and the breakup of the stratocumulus by cloud-top entrainment instability.

First, the total change in net longwave radiative flux in the lower cloud (Fig. 5), which causes heating, appears about half as large as the total change in net longwave radiative flux near cloud top, which produces cooling. From Fig. 7 we estimate the jump in net longwave radiative flux across cloud top to be about 80 W m$^{-2}$. Assuming a quasi-steady state in which $\partial\rho w \partial z (\partial h / \partial t) = 0$ in the boundary layer, with $h$ the moist static energy, we expect the vertical turbulent flux of $\rho w h$ in Fig. 7) to be linear if ra-
Radiative divergence is neglected. Longwave radiative flux divergence in the boundary layer makes the $\rho w' h'$ profile significantly nonlinear in MA80, although radiative flux divergence in the boundary layer is usually considered insignificant and ignored in trade-wind, mixed-layer models. By comparing the actual $\rho w' h'$ in the upper cloud and an extrapolated value based on the linear, subcloud profile of $\rho w' h'$, we find that $\rho w' h'$ increases by about 40 W m$^{-2}$ due to radiative warming in the lower cloud, or about half the change due to radiative loss at cloud top. Assuming that the lower cloud and the surface are black bodies, that there is an adiabatic lapse rate in the subcloud layer, and that the air–sea temperature difference is negligible, we can estimate an upper bound on the cloud-base increase in $\rho w' h'$ (due to radiative warming) as $\sigma [T_0^3 - (T_0 - \gamma_d z)^3]$, where $\sigma = 5.7 \times 10^{-8}$ W m$^{-2}$ K$^{-4}$, the surface temperature $T_0 = 295$ K, $\gamma_d$ is the dry adiabatic lapse rate and $z$ the height. For a cloud base at 750 m, the upper bound on cloud-base radiative warming is 42 W m$^{-2}$, which suggests the radiation model of MA80 has essentially no absorption in the subcloud layer. If the cloud base were at 1250 m, then the upper bound would be 69 W m$^{-2}$ comparable to the cloud top change of 80 W m$^{-2}$; however, for such long path lengths the only transmission should be in the atmospheric window (7–14 $\mu$m), which contains possibly 40% of the total longwave radiation, so these upper bounds should be divided by a factor of two and one-half (J. A. Coakley, personal communication, 1981). This would give smaller cloud-base changes in net longwave radiative flux. Also, the cloud-base changes would then be in agreement with values in the literature [for example, see Fravalo et al. (1981) and Sommeria (1976)]. Thus, the cloud-base warming of MA80 seems excessive.

If there were cloud-top radiative cooling but no cloud-base heating, then the falling, radiatively-cooled parcels would stir the entire boundary layer and the velocity variances in Fig. 6 would be approximately well-mixed throughout the planetary boundary layer. If there were just the large cloud-base radiative heating of MA80 and no cloud-top cooling, then the radiatively produced convection would be confined to the cloud layer (due to the stabilization across cloud base), as their results show. Thus, I conclude that in MA80 cloud-base radiative heating is possibly even more important than cloud-top cooling in determining their turbulence profiles.

My second comment is that MA80 seem to have used horizontal pressure gradients and hence mean wind speeds which were inappropriately low (by a factor of at least two and as much as six) for the region they modeled. This affects the horizontal evolution of the boundary layer. The planetary boundary layer initially is confined by an inversion across which potential temperature $\theta$ and equivalent potential temperature $\theta_e$ both increase. As the boundary layer evolves downstream, the surface fluxes of sensible heat and moisture increase $\theta_e$ in the boundary layer and the subsidence aloft may decrease $\theta_e$ just above the boundary layer. The jump $\Delta \theta_e$ at the inversion decreases and eventually becomes negative, which may lead to cloud-top entrainment instability. Thus, using a more appropriate, higher wind speed would alter the horizontal distance required before entrainment instability could occur (unless other parameters like the divergence were also changed).

In general, MA80 exaggerate the relative importance of cloud-top radiative cooling and cloud-base radiative heating, particularly in their turbulence, but also in their mean budgets. They seriously underestimate surface fluxes and hence, in the lower half of the boundary layer, the production of the total turbulent velocity variance $u'^2 + v'^2 + w'^2$ by buoyancy and shear. Consequently their results are an upper bound on the magnitude of the effect of radiative heating and cooling on boundary layer turbulence.

The primary simulations in MA80 have two spatial dimensions, height $z$ and horizontal distance $y$, where $y = 0$ at about 34°N, 135°W, and $y$ increases following an air trajectory toward Hawaii (Fig. 40 in Neiburger et al., 1961, shows an appropriate trajectory). In Fig. 3 of MA80, $y = 0$ on the right side corresponds to 34°N, 135°W (I will call it point A) and the left side is 1000 km downwind (point B). The wind speed is a maximum of about 3.5 m s$^{-1}$ near the surface at point B and decreases vertically and horizontally moving away from point B; at point A, the horizontal velocity $V = 1$ m s$^{-1}$.

Wind speeds of 1–3.5 m s$^{-1}$ are abnormally low for the North Pacific trade winds. I suspect that they referred to Fig. 35 in Neiburger et al. (1961), which is reproduced as Fig. 1 in Schubert et al. (1979). These figures show the magnitude of resultant or vector averaged winds which are much lower than average wind speeds, Fig. 4 in Schubert et al. (1979) shows that the average wind speed at 10 m varies from 6 to 7 m s$^{-1}$ along the trajectory being modeled by MA80. One can also arrive at comparable estimates of the geostrophic wind (6–8 m s$^{-1}$) using the sea surface pressure patterns shown as Fig. 4 in Schubert et al. (1979) or Fig. 32 in Neiburger et al. (1961). Thus, at point A the winds of MA80 are about a factor of six too low and at point B about a factor of two low.

MA80's abnormally low wind speeds will probably not seriously modify the downstream evolution of mean temperature and humidity profiles due to surface fluxes alone. To show this, consider the downstream evolution of mixed-layer potential temperature due to the surface flux of potential temperature $w\theta_v$, with

$$ w\theta_v = -C_{DH} V_{10}(\theta_{10} - \theta_0), \tag{1} $$

where $C_{DH}$ is a transfer coefficient for sensible heat.
flux, \( V_{10} \) is the wind speed at \( z = 10 \) m and \( \theta_{10} \) and \\
\( \theta_0 \) are the potential temperatures at 10 m and the \\
surface. The advective change in mixed layer \( \theta \) due \\
to \( w\theta_0 \) alone in a horizontal distance \( \Delta y \) is \\
\[
\frac{\theta_B - \theta_A}{\Delta y} = \frac{V w\theta_0}{z_i},
\]
where \( z_i \) is the inversion height and \( \theta_B \) and \( \theta_A \) are the \\
mixed layer \( \theta \)'s at points B and A. Substituting (1) in (2) yields \\
\[
\frac{\theta_B - \theta_A}{\Delta y} = \frac{C_{DH}(\theta_B - \theta_{10})\Delta y}{z_i}.
\]
Thus, to first order, the effect of wind speed cancels \\
for \( C_{DH} \) independent of wind speed. While a larger \\
wind speed implies a larger surface flux, the larger \\
flux has proportionately less time to act as the air \\
column moves a fixed distance \( \Delta y \) downwind.

While the change (in a fixed horizontal distance) \\
in mixed layer \( \theta \) and mixing ratio due to surface \\
fluxes is unaffected by wind speeds, these surface- \\
flux-induced changes would be relatively more im-

portant if a higher, more appropriate wind speed \\
were used, compared to changes due to other pro-
cesses not dependent on wind speed. For example, 
mixed layer temperature or equivalent poten-
tial temperature budgets and also in the mixed 
layer budget of \( q^2 \). In particular, their estimate of 

radiative warming at cloud base seems unrealisti-
cally large.

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**REFERENCES**


