#### Reduced models of large-scale ocean circulation

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#### The Coastal Ocean

#### Sea-surface Temperature



Off Oregon and California, the coastal ocean includes shelf (depths less than 200 m), slope, adjacent ocean interior (depths greater than 3000 m)

Oregon coastal domain: - several hundred km offshore - 41°N-47°N alongshore

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## **Equations (Physical Principles)**

Mass

Momentum

Salt

 Thermodynamic energy

Equation of state

$$\begin{split} \frac{D\rho}{Dt} + \rho \nabla \cdot \mathbf{u} &= 0, \quad \boxed{\frac{DF}{Dt} = \frac{\partial F}{\partial t} + \mathbf{u} \cdot \nabla F} \\ \rho \left( \frac{D\mathbf{u}}{Dt} + 2\Omega \times \mathbf{u} \right) &= -\nabla p - \rho \nabla \Phi - \nabla \cdot \mathbf{d} \\ \frac{DS}{Dt} &= k_S \nabla^2 S, \\ \rho \left[ \frac{D\hat{e}}{Dt} + p \frac{D}{Dt} \left( \frac{1}{\rho} \right) \right] &= k_T \nabla^2 T + \chi + \rho Q, \\ \rho &= \mathcal{R}(p, T, S). \end{split}$$

Scales of ocean fluid (continuum) motion

Motions of interest: at least 10 km = 10<sup>4</sup> m (horizontal) at least 10 m (vertical)

Smallest scale: of order  $1 \text{ mm} = 10^{-3} \text{ m}$ 

Ratio large/small: at least 10<sup>7</sup> (horizontal) at least 10<sup>4</sup> (vertical)

Degrees of freedom: at least  $10^7 \times 10^7 \times 10^4 = 10^{18}$ 

DNS is well beyond current computing capacity => This is still a physics (& mathematics) problem!

### Ocean Circulation: Mathematics or Applied Mathematics?

... Applied Mathematics???

There is no such thing. (Mathematics is not paint.)

Theorem: The object of study either has a mathematical structure, or it does not.Proof: Examination.

Corollary (Remark): Any such structure either is interesting, or is not. Proof: *De gustibus non est disputandum.* 

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#### Scales of motion

Motions of particular interest have typical scales...

10<sup>4</sup> m or greater (horizontal)
10 m or greater (vertical)
1 m s<sup>-1</sup> or less (horizontal velocity)
10<sup>-3</sup> m s<sup>-1</sup> or less (vertical velocity)
10<sup>4</sup> s or more (time)
15 °C or less (temperature)
35 parts per 1000 or less (salinity)

=> Use *a-priori* estimates of individual terms to simplify equations

## **Equations (Physical Principles)**

Mass

Momentum

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- Thermodynamic energy
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$$\begin{split} \frac{D\rho}{Dt} + \rho \nabla \cdot \mathbf{u} &= 0, \\ \rho \left( \frac{D\mathbf{u}}{Dt} + 2\Omega \times \mathbf{u} \right) &= -\nabla p - \rho \nabla \Phi - \nabla \cdot \mathbf{d} \\ \frac{DS}{Dt} &= k_S \nabla^2 S, \\ \rho \left[ \frac{D\hat{e}}{Dt} + p \frac{D}{Dt} \left( \frac{1}{\rho} \right) \right] &= k_T \nabla^2 T + \chi + \rho Q, \\ \rho &= \mathcal{R}(p, T, S). \end{split}$$

## Hydrostatic Boussinesq Primitive Equations for Ocean Circulation Modeling

<ul> <li>Mass</li> </ul>	$ abla \cdot \mathbf{u}$	=	0	
<ul> <li>Momentum</li> </ul>	$\frac{D\mathbf{u}_H}{Dt} + 2\Omega\sin\phi\mathbf{k}\times\mathbf{u}_H$	=	$-rac{1}{ ho_0} abla_2 p,$	$rac{\partial p}{\partial z} = -g ho$
<ul> <li>Salt</li> </ul>	$rac{DS}{Dt}$	=	0	
<ul> <li>Thermodynamic energy</li> </ul>	$\frac{DT}{Dt}$	=	0	
<ul> <li>Equation of state</li> </ul>	ρ	=	$\mathcal{R}(p,T,S)$	

...plus models of turbulent diffusion.

#### Schmitz (1996): Thermohaline circulation



#### Schmitz (1996): Atlantic overturning



#### Schmitz (1996): Atlantic overturning



# The mid-depth meridional overturning: NADW and the warm return flow



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#### WOCE A16 Salinity - 25 W

#### The mid-depth meridional overturning: NADW and the warm return flow



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#### **Planetary Geostrophic (PG) equations**

Start with:

'Rotating compressible Euler plus thermodynamic and salt equations and empirical EOS.'

Then nondimensionalize for planetary-scale motion and approximate:

- 1. Hydrostatic approximation (vertical momentum equation)
- 2. Geostrophic approximation (horizontal momentum equation)
- 3. Boussinesq approximation (mass and thermodynamic equations; momentum equations)
- 4. Linearized equation of state (often)
- 5. Geometric simplification (distortion, for convenience:  $\beta$ -plane)

Classical PG equations:

$$-fv = -p_x$$
$$fu = -p_y$$
$$0 = -p_z + T$$
$$u_x + v_y + w_z = 0$$
$$T_t + uT_x + vT_y + wT_z = 0$$

where ( $\beta$ -plane)

$$f = f_0 + \beta (y - y_0)$$

NB: T may represent temperature, potential temperature, or a combined temperature-salinity ('buoyancy') variable. Salinity S has been dropped or subsumed into the T variable. The S conservation equation, nonlinear equation of state, and independent boundary conditions can be reinstated, but PV conservation breaks down and analysis becomes more difficult.

Sverdrup vorticity relation:

$$\beta v = \beta f^{-1} p_x = f w_z$$

Geostrophic Sverdrup transport balance:

$$\beta V = \beta \int v dz = f(w_{top} - w_{bottom}) \quad \left\{ = f w_E = f[(\tau^y/f)_x - (\tau^x/f)_y)] \quad \text{if} \quad w_{bottom} = 0 \right\}$$

Potential vorticity (PV) conservation:

$$Q = fT_z \quad \Rightarrow \quad Q_t + uQ_x + vQ_y + wQ_z = 0$$

Bernoulli conservation:

$$B = p - zT \quad \Rightarrow \quad B_t + uB_x + vB_y + wB_z = B_t$$

Welander *M*-equation:

$$M_z = p, \quad M_x = \beta^{-1} f^2 w \quad \Rightarrow \quad M_{zzt} + f^{-1} (M_{xz} M_{zzy} - M_{yz} M_{zzx}) + \beta f^{-2} M_x M_{zzz} = 0$$

Classical PG equations for layers j, j = M, ..., N:

$$-fv_j = -p_{jx}$$

$$fu_j = -p_{jy}$$

$$0 = -p_{jz} + T_j$$

$$h_{jt} + (u_jh_j)_x + (v_jh_j)_y = 0 \quad (j > M)$$

$$h_{Mt} + (u_Mh_M)_x + (v_Mh_M)_y = -w_E$$

Here *j* increases downward from the uppermost (*M*) to the deepest moving (*N*) layer, and  $h_j$  is the layer-*j* thickness. The layer-*j* potential vorticity and Bernoulli functions are:

$$Q_j = \frac{f}{h_j}, \quad B_j = p_j.$$

Since by assumption layer N + 1 is stagnant ( $\nabla_2 p_{N+1} = 0$ ),

$$p_j = \sum_{k=j}^N \gamma_k H_k$$
, where  $H_j = \sum_{k=M}^j h_k$  and  $\gamma_j = T_j - T_{j+1}$ .

NB: The vertical coordinate *z* has been replaced by the index *j*, the  $T_j$  are constants, and all variables  $(u_j, v_j, p_j, h_j, Q_j, B_j, H_j)$  are functions of (x, y) and *t* only.

#### **Diffusive driving and energetics**:

Consider the steady PG equations with horizontal friction, diffusive heat flux, and convective adjustment in basin with vertical sidewalls and flat bottom.

$$-fv = -p_x + \mathscr{F}^x$$
$$fu = -p_y + \mathscr{F}^y$$
$$0 = -p_z + T$$
$$u_x + v_y + w_z = 0$$
$$uT_x + vT_y + wT_z = \kappa_v T_{zz} + \kappa_h \Delta_2 T + \mathscr{C}$$

No flow or heat flux through solid boundaries, no flow through surface:

$$(u, v) \cdot \mathbf{n} = \kappa_h \nabla_2 T \cdot \mathbf{n} = 0$$
 on sidewalls  
 $w = \kappa_v T_z = 0$  at  $z = -D$  and  $w = 0$  at  $z = 0$ 

Mechanical energy equation:

$$\int wT \, dx \, dy \, dz = \mathscr{D} = -\int \left( u \mathscr{F}^x + v \mathscr{F}^y \right) \, dx \, dy \, dz > 0$$

since

$$\int (u, v, w) \cdot \nabla p \, dx \, dy \, dz = \int p(u, v, w) \cdot \mathbf{n} \, dS = 0$$

Thermodynamic equation:

$$\begin{split} \int_{-D}^{z} \int_{(x,y)} (u,v,w) \cdot \nabla T \, dx dy dz &= \int \nabla \cdot \left[ (u,v,w) T \right] dx dy dz \\ &= \int_{-D}^{z} \oint T(u,v) \cdot \mathbf{n} \, dl dz + \left[ \int_{(x,y)} wT \, dx dy \right]_{-D}^{z} \\ &= \int_{(x,y)} wT \, dx dy |_{z} \\ &= \int_{-D}^{z} \int_{(x,y)} \nabla \cdot (\kappa_{h} \nabla_{2}T, \kappa_{v}T_{z}) \, dx dy dz + \int_{-D}^{z} \int_{(x,y)} \mathscr{C} \, dx dy dz \\ &= \int_{-D}^{z} \int_{(x,y)} \nabla \cdot (\kappa_{h} \nabla_{2}T, \kappa_{v}T_{z}) \, dx dy dz + \int \mathscr{C} \, dx dy dz \\ &= \int_{-D}^{z} \int_{(x,y)} \nabla_{2} \cdot \kappa_{h} \nabla_{2}T \, dx dy dz + \int_{-D}^{z} \kappa_{v}T_{zz} \, dz dx dy + \int \mathscr{C} \, dx dy dz \\ &= \int_{-D}^{z} \oint \left( \kappa_{h} \nabla_{2}T \cdot \mathbf{n} \right) dl dz + \left[ \int_{(x,y)} \kappa_{v}T_{z} \, dx dy dz \right]_{-D}^{z} + \int \mathscr{C} \, dx dy dz \\ &= \int_{(x,y)}^{z} \kappa_{v}T_{z} \, dx dy |_{z} + \int_{-D}^{z} \int_{(x,y)} \mathscr{C} \, dx dy dz \end{split}$$

So:

$$\int wT \, dx \, dy \, dz = \mathscr{D} = \int_{-D}^{0} \left[ \int_{(x,y)} \kappa_v T_{z'} \, dx \, dy |_{z'} + \int \mathscr{C} \, dx \, dy \, dz' \right] dz$$
$$= \int_{(x,y)} \kappa_v [T(z=0) - T(z=-D)] \, dx \, dy + \int_{-D}^{0} \left[ \int_{-D}^{z'} \int_{(x,y)} \mathscr{C} \, dx \, dy \, dz' \right] dz$$

The convective adjustment  $\mathscr{C}$  reduces mechanical (potential) energy, so it is a form of dissipation  $\left(\int_{-D}^{z}\int_{(x,y)}\mathscr{C} dx dy dz < 0\right)$ , as is  $\mathscr{D}$ . Thus, the circulation is driven **mechanically**, by the turbulent diffusion acting on the difference between top and bottom temperatures (densities):

$$\int_{(x,y)} \kappa_{v} [T(z=0) - T(z=-D)] dx dy = \text{Dissipation}$$

It follows that surface fluxes do not drive the circulation, and that this type of circulation is most accurately described as '**diffusively-driven**.' (Thus, to first order the ocean is not a heat engine.)

NB: Surface fluxes are necessary to maintain the difference between surface and bottom temperatures, without which the turbulent diffusion has no effect.

# The mid-depth meridional overturning: NADW and the warm return flow



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#### WOCE A16 Density - 25 W

# The mid-depth meridional overturning: NADW and the warm return flow



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WOCE A16 Salinity - 25 W

60 N

### The Model

- Reduced-gravity, one-layer, shallow-water, beta-plane, geostrophic + wind stress + linear (Stommel) friction
- Rectangular basin with circumpolar channel
- Analytical, zonally symmetric ACC (Samelson, 1999, 2004)
- Ekman transport across ACC into warm layer
- Eddy flux of warm water across ACC (parameterized)
- Surface heating and cooling, diapycnal flux across base of warm-water layer (parameterized)
- Steady state: total flux of water into warm layer must vanish

# The mid-depth meridional overturning: NADW and the warm return flow



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#### WOCE A16 Salinity - 25 W



#### Meridional overturning circulation: The Antarctic Circumpolar Current

The geostrophic constraint  $(\oint v dx = \oint f^{-1}p_x dx = f^{-1} \oint p_x dx = 0)$  prevents meridional geostrophic flow across the Southern Ocean to a depth of 1500-2000 m. The northward Ekman transport must therefore be returned southward by geostrophic flow beneath the still depth. In the simplest (PG) models, this forces the development of a warm mid-depth ocean at midlatitudes, and a thermal current that can be identified as an analogue of the Antarctic Circumpolar Current.

NB: See Stommel (1957), Gill (1968), and Gill and Bryan (1971)

#### A conceptual model: the role of the ACC



Gill, 1968; Gill and Bryan, 1971; Toggweiler and Samuels, 1995; Samelson, 1999....

The simple 'PG + gap' models suggest:

- The ACC is a thermal, not wind-driven, current, but would not exist without the wind.
- The mid-latitude mid-depth stratification is strong because of the presence of the gap.
- The mid-depth overturning can be driven by the wind, or by turbulent diffusion.
- The overturning mechanism can be understood as a 'pump and valve' system, in which the Southern Ocean winds or turbulent diffusion are the pump, and the Northern Hemisphere cooling is the valve.
- The wind-driven and diffusively-driven overturning systems cannot be easily distinguished from the thermal (density) structure.

#### A conceptual model: the pump and valve



Broecker, 1987; Stocker and Wright, 1991; Samelson, 2004....

#### A conceptual model: the role of eddy fluxes?



Gnanadesikan, 1999; MacCready and Rhines, 2001; Hallberg and Gnanadesikan, 2001;....

#### Schmitz (1996): Thermohaline circulation



#### Schmitz (1996): North Atlantic warm-water circulation



#### The Model - schematic



#### The Equations

$$-fvh = -\gamma hh_x - rhu + \tau^x(x, y),$$
  

$$fuh = -\gamma hh_y - rhv + \tau^y(x, y).$$
  

$$(hu)_x + (hv)_y = W(x, y)$$

$$hu = -\Psi_y - \Phi_x, \quad hv = \Psi_x - \Phi_y$$

 $\Phi_{xx} + \Phi_{yy} = -W$  $(r\Psi_x)_x + (r\Psi_y)_y + \beta\Psi_x = \tau_x^y - \tau_y^x + J(r,\Phi) + \beta\Phi_y - fW$ 

## The Equations, cont'd

$$W(x,y) = -\alpha_w [h^2(x,y) - h_*^2(x,y)]$$

$$u(y,z) = -\frac{1}{f} \frac{\gamma}{y_2 - y_1} (z + h_m), \quad y_1 < y < y_2, \quad -h_m < z < 0$$

$$h_m^2 = \frac{1}{x_E - x_W} \int_{x_W}^{x_E} h^2(x, y_2) \, dx$$

$$T_e = V_e(x_E - x_W), \quad V_e = -\alpha_e h_m^2$$

#### The Equations, cont'd

$$T_{Ek} + T_e + T_{w2} = 0$$

$$T_{w2} = T_w(y_2), \quad T_w(y) = \int_y^{y_N} \int_{x_W}^{x_E} W \, dx \, dy = \int_{x_W}^{x_E} \Phi_y(x, y) \, dx$$

$$\int_{x_W}^{x_E} \left( \alpha_w \int_{y_2}^{y_N} h^2(x, y) \, dy + \alpha_e \, h^2(x, y_2) \right) \, dx = \alpha_w \int_{y_2}^{y_N} \int_{x_W}^{x_E} h_*^2 \, dx \, dy + T_{Ek}$$

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial x}(h^2) = \frac{2}{\gamma}(\tau^x + r\Phi_x - f\Phi_y + f\Psi_x + r\Psi_y)$$
  
$$\frac{\partial}{\partial y}(h^2) = \frac{2}{\gamma}(\tau^y + r\Phi_y + f\Phi_x + f\Psi_y - r\Psi_x)$$

### The Forcing

$$h_*^2(y) = \begin{cases} h_0^2 - \delta h_N^2 y^6, & 0 < y < y_N = 1 \\ h_0^2, & y_2 < y < 0, \\ 0, & y_S < y < y_2. \end{cases}$$

$$\tau^{x} = \begin{cases} \tau_{0} \cos \frac{3\pi y}{2}, & y_{3} = -\frac{1}{3} < y < y_{N} = 1\\ \tau_{0} \cos \frac{3\pi y}{2} + \tau_{1} \frac{1}{2} \left( 1 - \cos \frac{\pi (y - y_{3})}{y_{2} - y_{3}} \right), & y_{2} < y < y_{3} = -\frac{1}{3} \end{cases}$$

#### The Model - schematic



#### **Scales and Parameters**

$$\begin{split} \gamma &= \frac{\tilde{\gamma}H}{f_0 UL} = \frac{g\Delta\rho H}{\rho_0 f_0 UL} = \frac{g\Delta\rho H^2}{\tau_* L} = 20, \qquad f = \frac{\tilde{f}}{\beta_0 L} = \beta y, \quad \beta = \frac{\tilde{\beta}}{\beta_0} = 1, \\ \tau_0 &= \frac{\tilde{\tau}_0}{\tau_* / \rho_0} : -2 \le \tau_0 \le 0, \qquad \tau_1 = \frac{\tilde{\tau}_1}{\tau_* / \rho_0} : -0.5 \le \tau_1 \le 0.5, \\ h_0^2 &= \frac{\tilde{h}_0^2}{H^2} = 1, \qquad \delta h_N^2 = \frac{\delta \tilde{h}_N^2}{H^2} : 0 \le \delta h_N^2 \le 6, \\ (\alpha_e, \alpha_w) &= (\tilde{\alpha}_e, \tilde{\alpha}_w H)T : 0 \le (\alpha_e, \alpha_w) \le 5, \qquad r = \frac{\tilde{r}}{f_0} = 0.02. \end{split}$$

$$g = 10 \text{ m s}^{-2}$$

$$\rho_0 = 1025 \text{ kg m}^{-3}$$

$$\Delta \rho / \rho_0 = 10^{-3}$$

$$H = 1000 \text{ m}$$

$$L = 5 \times 10^6 \text{ m}$$

$$f_0 = 10^{-4} \text{ s}^{-1}$$

$$\beta_0 = 2 \times 10^{-11} \text{ m}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$$

$$\tau_* = 0.1 \text{ N m}^{-2}.$$

$$U = \frac{\tau_0}{\rho_0 f_0 H} = 10^{-3} \text{ m s}^{-1}$$

$$T = L/U = 5 \times 10^9 \text{ s} = 160 \text{ yr}$$

$$UHL = 5 \times 10^6 \text{ m}^3 \text{ s}^{-1} = 5 \text{ Sv}$$

#### The Solution



### The Solution, cont'd



#### The Solution, cont'd



#### Analytical solution (weak friction and diabatic forcing)

$$\begin{vmatrix} h_E^2 &\approx & \frac{V_{Ek} - \alpha_w (y_N - y_2) \left[ \bar{D}_0^2 (y_2) - \bar{h}_*^2 (y_2) \right]}{\alpha_e + \alpha_w (y_N - y_2)} \\ V_e &\approx & -\alpha_e h_E^2 \\ V(y_2) &\approx & V_{Ek} - \alpha_e h_E^2 \end{vmatrix}$$

$$\begin{vmatrix} \lambda = \frac{2f^2}{\beta\gamma} \alpha_w \\ \lambda(x_E - x_W) << 1 \end{vmatrix} \qquad h^2(x, y) \approx h_E^2 + \frac{2f^2}{\beta\gamma} (x_E - x) \frac{\partial}{\partial y} \left(\frac{\tau^x}{f}\right)$$

$$\bar{h}_*^2(y) = \frac{1}{y_N - y} \int_y^{y_N} h_*^2(y') \, dy'$$
$$\bar{D}_0^2(y) = \frac{x_E - x_W}{y_N - y} \int_y^{y_N} \frac{f^2}{\beta \gamma} \frac{\partial}{\partial y} \left(\frac{\tau^x}{f}\right) \, dy$$

#### $h_E$ vs. diabatic forcing and eddy coefficients



Diabatic forcing coefficient

Eddy coefficient

#### Eddy coefficient for complete eddy compensation



Diabatic forcing (subpolar-tropical effective-depth difference)

#### The Model - schematic



# Meridional overturning transport at ACC vs. diabatic forcing and eddy coefficients

#### Net transport

Eddy transport



Eddy coefficient

Eddy coefficient

5

# Do southern hemisphere winds drive meridional overturning?



Eddy (thick lines) and diabatic forcing (thin lines) coefficients for Southern hemisphere wind stress amplitude +0.5 (solid lines) and -0.5 (dashed lines)

# Do southern hemisphere winds drive meridional overturning?



Eddy (thick lines) and diabatic forcing (thin lines) coefficients for Southern hemisphere wind stress amplitude +0.5 (solid lines) and -0.5 (dashed lines)

#### Summary

- Accessible model of warm-water branch of meridional overturning, including ACC, cross-ACC eddy fluxes, and diabatic (diapycnal) and wind-stress forcing
- Analytical solution for small friction and diabatic forcing
- Depth of warm layer controlled by three-way balance between diabatic (diapycnal) fluxes north of ACC and cross-ACC Ekman and eddy transports
- Eastern boundary depth of warm layer plays central role, controlling diabatic fluxes and cross-ACC eddy fluxes, and communicating warm-layer depth information between gyres and hemispheres; western boundary currents are passive
- Stronger southern hemisphere winds force larger eastern boundary depth, increasing compensating cross-ACC eddy fluxes and downwelling (cooling) north of ACC; meridional overturning also increases, but as part of a modified three-way balance, with spatial structure of overturning influenced by distribution of diabatic fluxes

#### **Future directions**

• Some clarification of previous ideas, but primarily a pedagogical model...should provide useful foundation for theoretical extensions

For example:

- Time-dependence
- Different (better) diabatic flux representation
- Active deep layer
- Generalization to thermohaline fluid multiple equilibria?
- Active western boundary currents
- ...?

=> Better understanding of ocean's role in global climate dynamics

#### The Equations

$$-fvh = -\gamma hh_x - rhu + \tau^x(x, y),$$
  

$$fuh = -\gamma hh_y - rhv + \tau^y(x, y).$$
  

$$(hu)_x + (hv)_y = W(x, y)$$

$$hu = -\Psi_y - \Phi_x, \quad hv = \Psi_x - \Phi_y$$

 $\Phi_{xx} + \Phi_{yy} = -W$  $(r\Psi_x)_x + (r\Psi_y)_y + \beta\Psi_x = \tau_x^y - \tau_y^x + J(r,\Phi) + \beta\Phi_y - fW$ 

## Time-dependence (NH cooling)



## Time-dependence (NH cooling)



# Time-dependence (NH cooling)



## Time-dependence (SH winds)



## Time-dependence (SH winds)



## Time-dependence (SH winds)



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