

# A Neuromuscular Model of *C. elegans* with Directional Control

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**Abstract** - This paper focuses on the nematode *C. elegans*, which has a relatively simple structure, and is one of the most analyzed organisms among multicellular ones. We aim to develop a computer model of this organism to analyze control mechanisms with respect to its movements. First, a neuronal circuit model for directional control and a kinematic model of the muscle body are proposed. Then, by integrating the two models, we construct the whole body model of *C. elegans*. The effectiveness of the proposed model is verified through a series of computer simulations.

**Keywords** - *C. elegans*; directional control; steering circuit model; kinematic model; computer simulation

## I. INTRODUCTION

Multicellular organisms have special and complex mechanisms to adapt to various conditions of their external environment. However, despite of recent progress of the experimental techniques in biology, even the simple nematode has never been fully clarified. In recent years, a new approach for analyzing functional mechanisms of living organisms, a computer simulation of a mathematical model, has been developed [1]. Using a computer model instead of the actual corresponding organism makes it possible to change environmental conditions easily and to analyze behavior repeatedly under the same conditions. If the experimental results of an actual organism can be approximated with high precision by the computer model, these model could be some help for the biological experiments. Also, using the model may make it possible to clarify some characteristics that cannot be measured in actual experiments.

*Caenorhabditis elegans* (a non-parasitic soil nematode) has a simple cylindrical body approximately 1.2 mm long that includes such fundamental organs as a nervous system, muscles, a pharynx, a hypodermis, an alimentary canal and genitals. The neuronal circuit of *C. elegans* processes various stimulations from the environment and controls forward and backward movements, rest, and search movements [2]-[5].

Because all the neuronal cells (neurons) of *C. elegans* have been identified and the connections have been approximately clarified [3], several computer models of the neuronal circuit of *C. elegans* have been proposed in recent years [6]-[8]. Much interest is centered on how *C. elegans* uses its muscles to perform and control various motions, and some body models of motor control have been proposed [9],[10]. The authors have also focused on the sinusoidal movement that is peculiar to *C. elegans*, and developed both kinematic and dynamic models of the muscle body [11],[12]. These models can express some patterns of two-dimensional movement. In addition, we modeled a neuronal

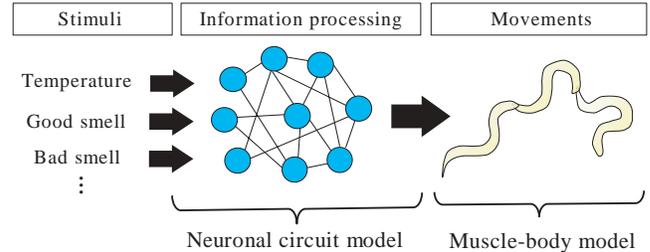


Fig. 1. Schematic diagram of the proposed model.

circuit for touch response and integrated it to the kinematic model of the muscle body. The model was able to simulate the motor control of responses to perceived touch stimulation [12].

In this paper, we propose a neuronal circuit model for directional control that realized movements such as turning in response to environment stimuli. Also, a three-dimensional kinematic model of the muscle body was constructed to realize the more complicated movements. As shown in Fig. 1, the proposed model consists of a neuronal circuit model, which processes stimuli and controls the muscles, and a muscle-body model, which executes movement. This paper is organized as follows: In Section II, the overview of *C. elegans* is explained. In Sections III and IV, a neuronal circuit model for direction control and a muscle-body model for movement are described in detail, respectively. In Section V, the behavior to environmental stimulation of the proposed model of *C. elegans* is verified through a series of computer simulations.

## II. STRUCTURE AND MOVEMENT OF *C. ELEGANS*

The body is composed of 959 cells including the 302 neurons [2]-[5]. The body-wall consists of four quadrants of striated muscles enclosed by the hypodermis that execute forward, backward and turning movements. Each quadrant consists of two closely apposed rows of muscles, as shown in Fig. 2. The pharyngeal muscles are located in the anterior part of the body and assume a leading role in searching the environment, turning the body and opening and closing the mouth. The neurons are classified into three main groups by function: sensory neurons, interneurons and motoneurons [2]-[5]. The sensory neurons detect external stimuli, and then the interneurons process information from the stimuli. Finally, the motoneurons control the muscles on the basis of signals from the interneurons.

*C. elegans* exhibits various movements, such as going forward and backward, and stopping and turn, that are controlled by the neuronal circuits [2],[8]. For example, motoneurons DB(1-7) and VB(1-11) control contraction and relaxation of the body-wall muscles, and overall control

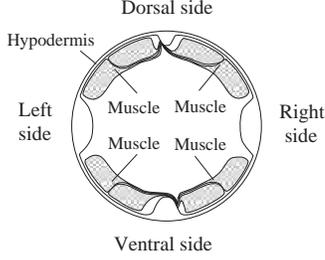


Fig. 2. Cross-section of the muscles.

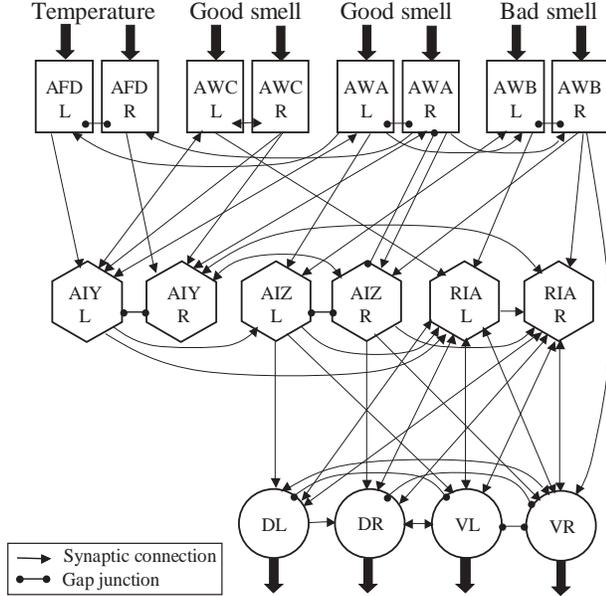


Fig. 3. A steering circuit model.

is performed by interneurons, AVB(L/R), in forward movement. DA(1-9), VA(1-12) and AVA(L/R) control backward movement [2]. Although the details of the neuronal circuit for directional control have not been clarified, Kawamura et al. identified the neurons that are likely concerned with directional control, and named the circuit that consists of these neurons “the steering circuit” [8].

*C. elegans* can respond to various kinds of environment stimuli. For example, *C. elegans* moves forward when it perceives a comfortable temperature or good smell, and turns when it perceives a bad smell. Although *C. elegans* also moves forward when it receives no stimulation, sometimes it stops or turns spontaneously.

In this paper, we focus especially on the steering circuit, and propose a model that controls the movement at the time a stimulus is received.

### III. MODELING OF STEERING CIRCUIT

#### A. Steering circuit model

Only the neurons that are supposed according to the literature [8] to participate in the directional control were extracted from the neuronal circuit map of *C. elegans* published by J.G. White et al. in 1986 [3]. Although *C. elegans* has many sensory neurons, the neurons included in the

steering circuit are particularly those that sense temperature or smell.

This model aims to realize control of movements, such as forward movement and turning, stimulated by temperature and smell. The proposed steering circuit model of *C. elegans* for directional control is shown in Fig. 3. In the figure, eight sensory neurons are shown as rectangles, six interneurons as hexagons and four motoneurons as circles. AFD(L/R), which manage the sense of temperature, perceive comfortable temperatures. AWC(L/R) and AWA(L/R) perceive volatile attractants (good smells), although they perceive different kinds of chemical materials. The stimuli perceived by the six sensory neurons cause a positive response. To the contrary, AWB(L/R) perceives volatile repellents (bad smells), and these stimuli cause a negative response. The eight sensory neurons compose the amphid, which is the sense organ on the head tip, and play the main role in the perception of environment stimuli [4].

The 14 motoneurons of the pharynx, SMB(DL/DR/VL/VR), RMD(L/R), RMD(DL/DR/VL/VR) and SMD(DL/DR/VL/VR), are divided into four positional groups, DL, DR, VL and VR, for simplicity to confirm that the neuronal circuit model realizes directional control according to stimuli in this paper. On this occasion, multiple connections between two neurons are simply modeled as a single connection. These four motoneurons control the corresponding muscles that exist in the four directions, respectively.

#### B. Characteristics of neurons

The model supposes that the outputs of sensory neurons are not linear reactions to the strength of the stimulus, according to the general characteristics of neurons [15],[16], and they are expressed by the following nonlinear equation based on a neuron model [16].

$$O_n = \frac{c_n}{1 + \exp(-a_n(I_n - b_n))} \quad (1)$$

where  $a_n$  is an inclination with output function of sensory neuron  $n$  ( $n \in \{AFD(L/R), AWC(L/R), AWA(L/R), AWB(L/R)\}$ ),  $b_n$  is the value of the stimulatory input at which the output of the neuron takes a central value, and  $c_n$  ( $0 \leq c_n \leq 1$ ) is the output gain and is equivalent to the stimulation reception sensitivity. Therefore,  $O_n$  outputs the continuation value of  $[0, 1]$ , which is normalized by the maximum output from the actual neuron. The stimulation input  $I_n$  to a sensory neuron,  $n$  ( $n \in \{AFD(L/R), AWC(L/R), AWA(L/R), AWB(L/R)\}$ ), is a stepless input of the range of  $[0, 1]$ , which quantifies the strength of the stimulation.

The characteristics of interneurons and motoneurons are also expressed by (1). The input  $I_n$  to the neuron,  $n$  ( $n \in \{AIY(L/R), AIZ(L/R), RIA(L/R), DL, DR, VL, VR\}$ ), is the result of the multiplication of the connection weight by the output of the connected neuron  $i$  or  $m$ , and is calculated by the following equation.

$$I_n = \sum_i w_{i,n} O_i + \sum_m g_{m,n} O_m, \quad (2)$$

where  $w_{i,n}$  and  $g_{m,n}$  are the connection weights of synaptic connections (one-way) and gap junctions (interactive), respectively ( $w_{i,n} \neq w_{n,i}$ , and  $g_{m,n} = g_{n,m}$ ).

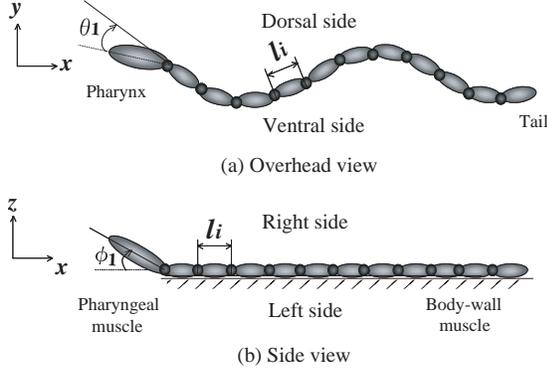


Fig. 4. The 12-link body model of *C. elegans*.

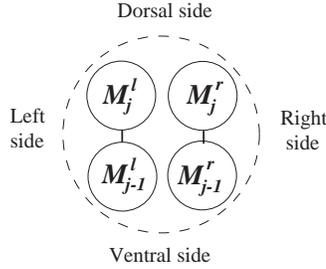


Fig. 5. Cross-section of the muscle model.

The muscle-body model of *C. elegans*, discussed in the next section, receives the outputs of motoneurons  $O_{DL}$ ,  $O_{DR}$ ,  $O_{VL}$  and  $O_{VR}$ .

#### IV. MODELING OF MUSCLE BODY FOR MOVEMENT

##### A. Muscle-body model for movement

In this paper, the complete body of *C. elegans* is represented by a rigid 12-link model, which consists of 11 segments of body-wall muscles and one segment of pharyngeal muscle (Fig. 4). The relative angles,  $\theta_i$  and  $\phi_i$ , to the  $(i+1)$ -th link of the  $i$ -th link ( $i = 1, 2, \dots, 11$ ) are angles of the dorso-ventral and left-right directions of each joint, respectively ( $-\pi \leq \theta_i, \phi_i \leq \pi$  [rad/sec]).

Four muscles shown in Fig. 2 are modeled at each joint as shown in Fig. 5. The internal states of the muscles on the dorsal and ventral sides on the left are denoted as  $M_j^l$  and  $M_{j-1}^l$ , and the internal states of the muscles on the right are  $M_j^r$  and  $M_{j-1}^r$ . Then, the  $i$ -th dorso-ventral joint angle,  $\theta_i$ , is expressed by using the internal states of the muscles as follows:

$$\frac{d\theta_i}{dt} = \alpha_i \{ (M_j^l + M_j^r) - (M_{j-1}^l + M_{j-1}^r) \}, \quad (3)$$

where  $\alpha_i$  is a positive constant ( $-\pi \leq \alpha_i \leq \pi$  [rad/sec]), which is equivalent to the velocity gain for the  $i$ -th joint. The subscript,  $j$  and  $j-1$ , show the number of each muscle, the  $i$ -th muscle on the dorsal side is denoted by  $j = 2i$  ( $i = 1, 2, \dots, 11$ ), and the one on the ventral side by  $j-1$ .  $\theta_i$  is decided by the difference between the sum of the dorsal internal states and one of the ventral. In the same

way, the  $i$ -th left-right joint angle,  $\phi_i$ , is

$$\frac{d\phi_i}{dt} = \beta_i \{ (M_j^r + M_{j-1}^r) - (M_j^l + M_{j-1}^l) \}, \quad (4)$$

where  $\beta_i$  is a positive constant ( $-\pi \leq \beta_i \leq \pi$  [rad/sec]) that is equivalent to the velocity gain.  $\phi_i$  is decided by the difference between the sum of the right internal states and one of the left.

Because the internal state,  $M$  ( $M \in \{M_j^l, M_j^r, M_{j-1}^l, M_{j-1}^r\}$ ), of the muscle is equivalent to the membrane potential, it is possible to express it as the sum of the direct current voltage  ${}^D M$  corresponding to the bias component and the oscillating voltage  ${}^A M$  corresponding to the frequency component. For example, the internal state of the  $j$ -th muscle on the right of the dorsal side,  $M_j^r$ , can be expressed as follows.

$$M_j^r = {}^D M_j^r + {}^A M_j^r \quad (5)$$

In this paper, the following assumptions are introduced.

**A.1** Two pairs of components,  ${}^A M_j^l$  and  ${}^A M_{j-1}^l$ , and  ${}^A M_j^r$  and  ${}^A M_{j-1}^r$ , produce the oscillations with the same phase. In this paper, two pairs of components on the left and right sides oscillate identically at each joint.

$$\left. \begin{aligned} {}^A M_j^l &= {}^A M_j^r \\ {}^A M_{j-1}^l &= {}^A M_{j-1}^r \end{aligned} \right\} \quad (6)$$

**A.2** The oscillation produced by each pair of components,  ${}^A M$ , is expressed by using Matsuoka's neuronal oscillator model [13]. For example, the frequency component,  ${}^A M_j^r$ , of the  $j$ -th muscle on the right of the dorsal side can be expressed as follows.

$$\frac{T_r}{\gamma} \frac{d {}^A M_j^r}{dt} + {}^A M_j^r = \sum_{n \neq j} v_{j,n}^r V_n^r - b_j^r f_j^r + \gamma s_j^r, \quad (7)$$

$$\frac{T_a}{\gamma} \frac{df_j^r}{dt} + f_j^r = V_j^r, \quad (8)$$

$$V_j^r = \begin{cases} {}^A M_j^r & ({}^A M_j^r \geq 0) \\ 0 & ({}^A M_j^r < 0), \end{cases} \quad (9)$$

where  $T_r$  and  $T_a$  are time constants;  $v_{j,n}^r$  is the connection weight from the  $j$ -th oscillator to the  $n$ -th oscillator;  $b_j^r$  denotes a fatigue coefficient;  $f_j^r$  is the state of the oscillator;  $s_j^r$  is a tonic input from oscillators connecting with the  $j$ -th oscillator; and  $V_n^r$  is the output of the  $n$ -th oscillator.  $\gamma$  is a gain with respect to the time constants [12], and  $\gamma = 1$  in Matsuoka's original model.

Under the above assumptions, (3) and (4) are respectively reduced to

$$\frac{d\theta_i}{dt} = \alpha_i \{ 4 {}^A M_j^l + ({}^D M_j^l + {}^D M_j^r) - ({}^D M_{j-1}^l + {}^D M_{j-1}^r) \}, \quad (10)$$

$$\frac{d\phi_i}{dt} = \beta_i \{ ({}^D M_j^r + {}^D M_{j-1}^r) - ({}^D M_j^l + {}^D M_{j-1}^l) \}, \quad (11)$$

where  ${}^A M_j^l = -{}^A M_{j-1}^l$ .

For example, if the following equality is true in (10), movement to the dorso-ventral direction is determined only

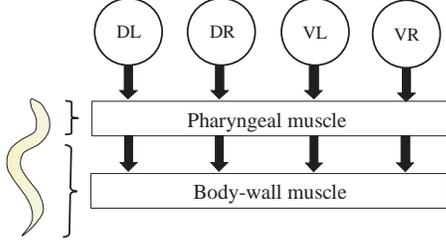


Fig. 6. Motor control by a steering circuit model.

by the frequency components,  $^A M$ , of the internal state of the muscle.

$${}^D M_j^l + {}^D M_j^r = {}^D M_{j-1}^l + {}^D M_{j-1}^r \quad (12)$$

Furthermore, from (11), the left-right joint angle,  $\phi_1$ , with respect to the pharyngeal movement is derived only by the bias components,  ${}^D M$ , of the internal states of muscles. If the right-hand side of (11) is positive, the pharynx lifts to the left. In this case, the dorso-ventral contraction and relaxation of the muscles are realized only by  $^A M$  based on the neuronal oscillator model, and left-right contraction and relaxation only by  ${}^D M$ .

### B. Integration of neuronal circuit model and muscle-body model

The steering circuit model described in Section III is connected to the muscle-body model in Section IV.

In this study, directional control of the muscle-body model in forward movement is realized by giving outputs of the steering circuit model to the muscle-body model as the bias components,  ${}^D M_1^d$  and  ${}^D M_2^d$  ( $d \in \{l, r\}$ ). The relationship between outputs of motoneurons of the steering circuit model and the bias components of the muscle-body model is as follows:

$$\left. \begin{aligned} {}^D M_1^l &= O_{VL} \\ {}^D M_1^r &= O_{VR} \\ {}^D M_2^l &= O_{DL} \\ {}^D M_2^r &= O_{DR} \end{aligned} \right\} \quad (13)$$

The motoneurons of the pharynx and body-wall muscles are partially connected in the actual organism. As shown in Fig. 6, outputs of motoneurons of the pharynx are transmitted through the pharynx to body-wall muscles. Therefore, outputs of steering circuit model are given to the corresponding muscles as the bias component,  ${}^D M_j^d$  and  ${}^D M_{j-1}^d$  ( $d \in \{l, r\}$ ;  $j = 2i = 4, \dots, 22$ ), as well as those in the first joint. As mentioned in Section III, a sinusoidal wave of forward movement is realized in this model by adjusting the frequency component,  $^A M$ , based on Matsuoka's neuronal oscillator model [13].

Using the above system, directional control of the muscle-body model based on the outputs of the steering circuit model can be realized. In the next section, a computer simulation, which represents a series of stimulation responses by the integration model of *C. elegans*, is carried out.

TABLE I  
DESIRED OUTPUTS OF MOTONEURONS FOR STIMULATION INPUTS TO SENSORY NEURONS.

	$u = 1$	$u = 2$	$u = 3$	$u = 4$	$u = 5$
$I_{AFD(L/R)}(u)$	1	0	0	0	0
$I_{AWC(L/R)}(u)$	0	1	0	0	0
$I_{AWA(L/R)}(u)$	0	0	1	0	0
$I_{AWB(L/R)}(u)$	0	0	0	1	0
$O_{DL}^*(u)$	0.1	0.1	0.1	0	0
$O_{DR}^*(u)$	0.1	0.1	0.1	0	0
$O_{VL}^*(u)$	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0
$O_{VR}^*(u)$	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0
movement	FD	FD	FD	TR	FD

## V. COMPUTER SIMULATION

### A. Simulation Settings

In this simulation, the coefficients for sensory neurons included in (1) are set as  $a_n = 15$ ,  $b_n = 0.6$  and  $c_n = 1$ , based on references giving data on the neuronal characteristics of higher organisms [14],[15]. Also, those for the interneurons and motoneurons are set as the same values except for  $c_n = 0.1$  in motoneurons.

In the muscle-body model, the link lengths,  $l_i$ , are set to  $l_1 = 0.2$ ,  $l_2 = l_3 = \dots = l_{12} = 0.1$  [mm] to approximate the actual body length, which is about 1.2 [mm]. In the neuronal oscillators, the initial values of  ${}^A M_k^d$  are all set to 1,  $b_k^d = 18$ ,  $f_k^d = 1$  and  $s_k^d = 5$  ( $d \in \{l, r\}$ ;  $k = 1, 2, \dots, 22$ ), and the time constants are set to  $T_r = 0.12$  [sec] and  $T_a = 0.24$  [sec] by trial and error based on the literature such as [18]. Under the above setting, the differential equations included in (6), (7) and (8) are calculated every  $1.0 \times 10^{-3}$  [sec] by using the fourth-order Runge-Kutta method.

This simulation considers only whether each sensory neuron receives stimulation or not for simplicity, although the sensory neurons in this model can sense differences in stimulus strength.  $I_n = 1$  when stimulation is given, and 0 when no stimulation is given. Also, since neurons AFDL and AFDR, AWCL and AWCR, AWAL and AWAR, and AWBL and AWBR are in the same class, they sense the same stimulation input at same time, respectively. In addition, some kinds of stimulation are not given at same time. Therefore, responses to five patterns of stimulation, i.e., four kinds of stimuli and non-stimulation are dealt with in this simulation. The desired outputs of four motoneurons,  $O_n^*(u)$  ( $n \in \{O_{DL}, O_{DR}, O_{VL}, O_{VR}\}$ ), for five patterns of stimulation inputs to eight sensory neurons,  $I_n(u)$  ( $n \in \{AFD(L/R), AWC(L/R), AWA(L/R), AWB(L/R)\}$ ;  $u = 1, \dots, 5$ ), are shown in Table I. In the table, FD means forward movement, and TR turning.

As shown in the table, it is assumed that the body moves forward even when no stimulation is given ( $u = 5$ ). Also, the body moves forward in response to stimulation when a suitable temperature or good smell is sensed ( $u = 1, 2, 3$ ), and it turns when a bad smell is sensed ( $u = 4$ ).

Although turns to the ventral and dorsal sides are possible, for simplicity it is assumed that a turn occurs always to the ventral side in this simulation. At each joint, the set value of bias components of the muscles for a turn is underspecified. It is assumed that motoneurons, DL and

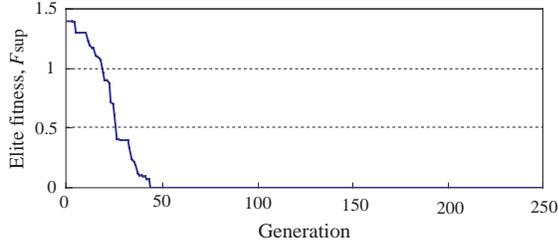


Fig. 7. Evolution of the elitist fitness value.

DR, which correspond to the dorsal muscles, output 0, and VL and VR output given positive values. Therefore, on each joint, the bias components of ventral muscles,  ${}^D M_{j-1}^d$  ( $d \in \{l, r\}; j = 2, 4, \dots, 22$ ), are larger than those of dorsal muscles, and thus, the muscle-body model turns in a ventral direction. On the other hand, four motoneurons output the same value when a positive stimulation is given, and 0 when no stimulation is received.

### B. Optimization of the neuronal circuit model by a real-coded GA

In the steering circuit model based on the actual structure described in Section III, the connection weights of the chemical synaptic connections and the gap junctions must be appropriately set to realize the desired output according to the stimulation inputs. However, at the present moment, it is almost impossible to measure these values by biological experiments with actual organisms. Therefore, in this paper, we employed a real-coded genetic algorithm (GA) [17] in order to adjust these connection weights, 59 chemical synaptic connections and nine gap junctions.

All connection weights are adjusted to obtain the appropriate outputs to the  $U$  patterns of stimulation inputs to sensory neurons. In this paper, a method of real-coded GA [17] is employed, where each parameter is included as the  $r$ -th component ( $r = 1, 2, \dots, 68$ ) in a GA string  $q_p$ , and the three steps of (i) selection, (ii) crossover and (iii) mutation are carried out in each generation  $G$ , where  $p$  ( $p = 1, 2, \dots, P$ ) is the serial number of the individuals [12].

The fitness function  $F(p)$ , which is the evaluation standard of the solutions, is defined as (14) in order to reduce the difference between the desired output signal of the motoneurons,  $O_n^*$  ( $n \in \{DL, DR, VL, VR\}$ ), and the actual output signal,  ${}^p O_n(u)$ . The steering circuit model is optimized to minimize the value of  $F(p)$ .

$$F(p) := \sum_{m=1}^m \left\{ \frac{1}{U} \sum_{u=1}^U |O_n^*(u) - {}^p O_n(u)| \right\} \quad (14)$$

$(p = 1, 2, \dots, P)$

where the  $U = 5$  patterns with  $P = 50$  individuals and  $G = 250$  generations. The evolution of the elite fitness  $F_{\text{sup}}(g)$  of the elite individual,  $q_{\text{sup}}(g)$ , in each generation,  $g$  ( $g = 1, 2, \dots, 250$ ), is shown in Fig. 7. The figure confirms that the value of the fitness function,  $F(p)$ , almost converged at the 50th generation. The optimal set of 68 parameters at the 250th generation of the above GA was used as the connection weights of the steering circuit model.

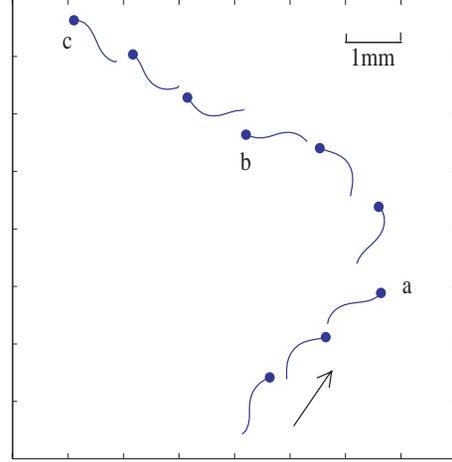


Fig. 8. Motion trajectory of the proposed neuromuscular model.

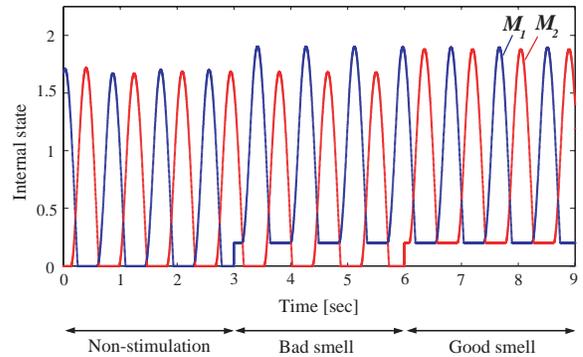


Fig. 9. Internal states of the muscles,  $M_1$  and  $M_2$

### C. Responses to stimuli

To confirm that the proposed model can realize motor control according to stimulation inputs to the steering circuit model, a series of computer simulations were carried out.

In the simulation, no stimulation is given for the first 3 [sec], and then a bad smell is given for 3 [sec] and a good smell for the final 3 [sec]. First, the motion of the model controlled by the stimulation that is received by the sensory neurons is plotted every 1 [sec] in Fig. 8. In the figure,  $c$  is the head of *C. elegans*, and  $a$ ,  $b$  and  $c$  are the head positions at 3, 6 and 9 [sec], respectively. The model moved forward in a sinusoidal wave for the first 3 [sec], then turned for the next 3 [sec] and finally moved forward again. The result confirmed that the stimulation inputs are processed appropriately by the steering circuit model, and that motor control appropriate to stimulation can be well realized by the proposed muscle-body model.

Next, the sums of the internal states of the muscles on the dorsal side,  $M_1 = M_1^l + M_1^r$ , and ventral sides,  $M_2 = M_2^l + M_2^r$ , are shown (Fig. 9). The result demonstrates that the muscles on the dorsal and ventral sides repeated contraction and relaxation alternately and that an approximately opposite phase could be successfully expressed. It demonstrates that the sinusoidal movement can be realized by the behavior of the neuronal oscillators. Also, when a bad stimulus is given,

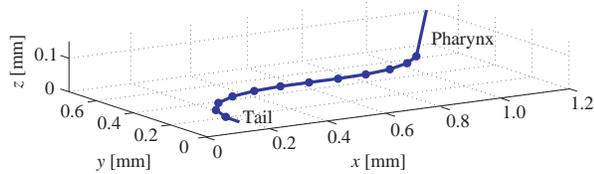


Fig. 10. A resulted form of the model in pharyngeal movement.

only the internal states of the muscles on the ventral side have large values. All internal states in the other joints show the same behavior. This means that the inputs to the muscles were changed on the basis of the outputs of the steering circuit model and the muscle-body model was induced to turn toward the ventral side. It can be seen that forward movement and turning, which correspond to stimulus input, can be realized by using the proposed model of the steering circuit.

Although turning is realized by adjusting the values of each bias component in this model, the set of values of bias components on each joint for turns are underspecified. Therefore, it will be necessary to consider the way to set these values. Also, actual responses, including the frequency and angle of turns, must be realized in more detail by considering various patterns of stimulation than just the existence of stimuli.

#### D. Pharyngeal movement of muscle-body model

In Subsection 5.3, it was confirmed that turning and forward movement as a sinusoidal wave were realized by the proposed model. Then, in this simulation, the left-right movement of the muscle-body model, such as lifting the pharynx, was confirmed. Left-right movement of the muscle-body model was realized by adjusting the values of each bias component, as in the case of the dorso-ventral direction. In this simulation, the lifting of the pharynx is considered. The bias components of muscles of the first joint were set as  ${}^D M_1^l = {}^D M_2^l = 0$ ,  ${}^D M_1^r = {}^D M_2^r = 0.5$ , and ones of the other joints were  ${}^D M_{j-1}^l = {}^D M_j^l = {}^D M_{j-1}^r = {}^D M_j^r = 0$  ( $j = 4, 6, \dots, 22$ ).

A resulted form of the pharyngeal lifting of the model is shown in Fig. 10. From the figure, it can be confirmed that the whole body forms a sinusoidal wave and the pharynx is lifted. By adjusting the bias components on the other joints, a form, such as lifting the whole body, may also be realized. If the neuronal circuit for control of the left-right movement is identified, it is expected that the movement will be realized based on outputs of the neuronal circuit model.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This study focused on *C. elegans* and proposed its neuromuscular model. This model consisted of a neuronal circuit model for directional control and a kinematic model of the muscle body for movement. It was possible to generate the sinusoidal movement of *C. elegans* by using the proposed rigid model of a muscle body with 11 joints that incorporates the neuronal oscillators. Responses corresponding to stimulation inputs were realized by connecting the steering circuit model with the muscle-body model. Also, the expression of three-dimensional movements, such as lifting the pharynx, in addition to the planar movement of crawling on the ground became possible.

In future research, a series of behaviors of actual *C. elegans*, such as a series of forward movement, stimulus reception, backward movement, stopping, forward movement, stimulus reception and turn, will be realized by integrating some neuronal circuit models for various kinds of stimulation into the muscle-body model.

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