

# *Fly Fly My Butterfly*

*Fly Fly My Butterfly* (Doordarshan, India), a non-fiction program for children up to age 6, is about how a young girl comes to understand the life cycle of a butterfly (cf. screenshot 1). The girl narrates her story of discovery in her native tongue and recites a verse in English: “Fly fly my butterfly, fly far off land”. The girl draws, colors, and cuts butterflies to decorate a living plant in her home (cf. screenshot 2, 3). A feminine sense is created through the girl’s costume and is supported by musical chimes and synthesizers. Realizing the paper cut-outs cannot fly, the girl moves them to a tree outdoors. She wonders about flight and tries to bring the butterflies to life with her song (cf. screenshot 4). Cutaway footage shows a variety of real butterflies (cf. screenshot 5). The girl moves close to a tree and uses a magnifier to investigate (cf. screenshot 6). When she focuses on an egg the butterfly laid, she is surprised by a caterpillar (cf. screenshot 7). Her grandpa tells her the caterpillar eats and sleeps inside a cocoon. Close-ups are shown of different stages and types of real butterflies and predators such as a wasp and a bird. The girl checks on the cocoon and is amazed by its changes. “Bravo!” she says as she takes the newly transformed butterfly onto her hands (cf. screenshot 8).

*Fly Fly My Butterfly* was one of the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL 2012 finalists in the Up to 6 Non-Fiction category.

## International experts’ opinions

International experts shared their opinions about *Fly Fly My Butterfly* during the discussion sessions at the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL 2012. Overall, this program was well received by experts. They liked the concept that as a viewer, you were joining the girl on a journey that seemed real and unhurried. The musical background and cinematography supported the story with plentiful close shots that lingered long enough to allow you to really see the beauty of the butterflies.

“With *Fly Fly My Butterfly*, you were just allowed to watch. I thought it was lovely and that we were given the time...and you weren’t told what to think.” (female expert, UK)

Some felt the story unfolded in a natural way that enabled learning to occur and thus, *Fly Fly My Butterfly* was one of the best representations of the 2012 Prix Jeunesse theme: Watch, Learn and Grow with Children’s TV. Many commented on the beauty of the cinematography.

“The pictures themselves were gorgeous.” (male expert, Canada)

“Outside of animation, I thought that was the clearest sequence of a butterfly emerging that I’ve seen for a long time.” (male expert, UK)

Many agreed that the theme of transformation is universal. This curriculum is taught around the world to this age group.

“I will never tire of that story of the caterpillar turning into a butterfly. Never. I think that’s something deeply human, this whole metamorphosis.” (female expert, UK)



Ill. 1: *Fly Fly My Butterfly* is a young girl’s discovery of the caterpillar turning into a butterfly



Ill. 2: In the girl’s home, she creates paper butterflies



Ill. 3: Paper butterflies are used to decorate a houseplant



Ill. 4: In the yard, the girl sings a song to the butterflies



Ill. 5: Shots of real butterflies are interspersed with the story



Ill. 6: The girl uses a magnifier to look closely at a tree



Ill. 7: She is surprised to find a caterpillar emerging from an egg



Ill. 8: Here the girl holds a newly-emerged butterfly in her hand

A few viewers objected to the scripted, adult feel of the program. Some questioned the drawing activity and whether much of it was the work of an adult. Some said camera shots were interrupted, and thus the story of life cycle – egg, caterpillar, cocoon, butterfly – was not as effective as it could have been.

“I didn’t feel like she was exploring because she wanted to. It was more like, this is my job to explore this. Let’s look through this small camera because we need a shot.” (male expert, Canada)

“What could have been explained is what kind of lens she used...it would have been interesting to pilot to other children. How do you do your own lens?” (female expert, Germany)

Viewers discussed the importance of the girl’s role as presenter, pointing out that the best approach would be to allow the girl to discover the world around her in a naturalistic sense.

*Elizabeth Spezia (Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, USA)*

Screenshots from *Fly My Butterfly* © Doordarshan, India

Target Audience 6.70

Idea 6.27

Script 5.73

Realization 6.25

Average Score per Category by experts’ voters at PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONALE 2012