**Introduction:**  
 Jasper Jones is a coming-of-age mystery set in a small rural town, where the young protagonist becomes entangled in secrets, racial tensions, and moral conflicts. Different viewers offer varied opinions on the film's portrayal of social and cultural issues—some claim that its focus on a young, white protagonist softens the reality of these challenges, while others see it as a thoughtful look at identity and community problems. While Ellen van Neerven argues that the film’s adolescent white perspective glosses over the harsher sociocultural realities, the evidence presented in the film—from its exploration of racial identity, through its clear exposure of community prejudice, to its examination of systemic injustice—shows that the narrative is complex and deeply engaged with the political and cultural issues of its setting.

**Argument 1: Reclaiming Racial and Cultural Identity**  
 **Point:**  
 The film challenges van Neerven's view by showing that Jasper is very aware of his cultural background. Instead of a simple or naive perspective, the film highlights Jasper’s understanding of his heritage and its implications for his identity.

**Evidence:**  
 In a key moment, Jasper says,

“I haven’t even seen a photograph. But I know she’s where I get my colour from. Her people aren’t from round here.”  
 The evidence presented in the film shows that Jasper’s acknowledgment of his heritage is a deliberate reflection on cultural differences rather than an oversight of sociopolitical realities.

**Argument 2: Exposing Community Prejudice and Racial Tensions**  
 **Point:**  
 The film does not hide the reality of racial prejudice in its community. Instead, it clearly presents instances of hostility that reveal deep-seated tensions, directly challenging the notion that the story is overly sanitized by its youthful perspective.

**Evidence:**  
 A strong example occurs when a character shouts,

“Yellow-skinned bastard!”  
 The evidence presented in the film demonstrates that the narrative openly shows racial hostility, countering the idea that its focus on youth softens the depiction of harsh social realities.

**Argument 3: Confronting Moral Ambiguity and Systemic Injustice**  
 **Point:**  
 Beyond being a simple coming-of-age story, the film delves into complex moral dilemmas and community failures. It links personal actions with broader issues of blame and responsibility, indicating that social injustice is a central theme.

**Evidence:**  
 During a heated exchange, a character accuses Jasper,

“Jasper, you killed Laura Wishart!”  
 The evidence presented in the film uses this moment to highlight how personal conflict is connected to wider systemic problems, showing that the narrative critically examines social and moral challenges.

**Develop a Thesis Statement:**  
 While Ellen van Neerven argues that the film’s adolescent white perspective glosses over the harsher sociocultural realities, the evidence presented in the film—from its exploration of racial identity, through its clear exposure of community prejudice, to its examination of systemic injustice—shows that the narrative is complex and deeply engaged with the cultural and political issues of its setting.