

In this LA Times article, Paul Bogard makes a persuasive argument that we must take steps to preserve natural darkness. His argument employs a combination of qualitative and quantitative evidence, along with diction that evokes emotion in the reader. He ~~establishes~~ establishes a trend of increasing light pollution with statistics; argues that ~~this~~ this shortage of darkness has societal costs, including health and environmental impact, presents intangible drawbacks ~~like~~ like reduced creativity; and ~~uses~~ uses pathos to share his childhood nostalgia for darkness with the reader. The net effect is to convince his audience to appreciate "the irreplaceable value and beauty of the darkness we are losing."

To make his case that we must preserve natural darkness, Bogard first needs to show that this darkness is threatened. He does so using data — for instance, "the amount of light in the sky increases an average of about 6% every year" and "8 of 10 children born in the United States will never know a sky dark enough for the Milky Way." These data points show that the amount of darkness in the night sky is indeed in decline. The reader sees that, as a consequence, preservation attempts will be required in order to halt or reverse this trend of increasing light pollution. This establishing argument logically

sets the stage for Bogard's other points that maintaining levels of nighttime darkness is desirable.

One line of reasoning in this article is "large-scale" — Bogard contends that light pollution negatively impacts society in aggregate. For instance, he cites the economic impact that "much of this light is wasted energy, which means wasted dollars." To demonstrate health concerns associated with too much light, the article presents statements from the WHO and AMA, in addition to arguing that light pollution causes sleep disorders "linked to diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease, and depression." Bogard also describes ecological damage such as "wrecking habitat and disrupting ecosystems several billion years in the making." By offering three different examples of societal damage due to light pollution, the article appeals to readers with different priorities and makes a more robust case that natural darkness needs to be preserved. Anyone who opposes economic waste, public health liabilities, or environmental damage is led to believe his claim.

Another, somewhat different, tack that Bogard takes is that natural darkness enriches the human spirit. He suggests that darkness "can provide solitude, quiet, and stillness," which are desirable aspects of life that the reader will naturally wish to preserve. Bogard also associates nighttime darkness with the arts, ~~and~~ asking "In a world awash with electric



light... how would Van Gogh have given the world his 'Starry Night'? The implication is obvious: failure to preserve the night sky, Bogard believes, will reduce human creativity and lead to less artistic output. To an audience that appreciates the arts, it naturally follows that natural darkness should be protected.

In addition to his reasoning, Bogard uses word choice to instill a sense of childlike wonder. He recalls "woods so dark that my hands disappeared before my eyes" at a family cabin, and describes "night skies in which meteors left smoky trails across sugary spreads of stars." This poetic language gives the reader an emotional connection to the natural darkness that Bogard remembers, painting it as a rare and exquisite experience from the past. In doing so, Bogard invites the audience to think fondly of the night sky as something to be protected, which furthers his argument for preservation.

In short, "Let There Be Dark" makes a strong case against light pollution. It shows that preserving natural darkness would lead to many positive effects, from saving money to reducing disease to protecting wildlife, and that it is therefore a worthwhile undertaking. It contends that preservation would also benefit human creativity and the arts, in addition to offering an emotionally resonant experience from Bogard's childhood. The takeaway is that darkness is in danger, and darkness is good, so darkness should be preserved.