A recurring theme in “The Rhetorical Situation” by Lloyd Bitzer is how context is constructed in rhetoric. He starts by emphasizing the “presence of a situation” and how it “indicates the presence of a rhetorical situation” (Bitzer 1). This relates back to context because if there were no reference point for exigence, then situation wouldn’t be a vital building block to rhetoric. “Virtually no utterance is fully intelligible unless meaning-context and utterance are understood” (Bitzer 3).

“It seems clear that rhetoric is situational” (Bitzer 6) and context’s roots relies on “three constituents …. : exigence, … audience, … and constraints” (Bitzer 3). “If someone says, That is a dangerous situation” (Bitzer 1) then the audience will instantly have an anchor to hold the weight of the conversation, thus establishing context. The use of dangerous is a constraint in this case to every other situation that may be inferred. Exigence gives a canvas its basic color scheme and setting, the audience fills in the life forms present, and constraints add the accents and details that make the picture different from anything else. When the three are successfully constructed the final picture is subliminal imagery, or context.