In “The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation”, Richard E. Vatz argues that salience is rhetoric’s main predecessor versus Bitzer’s naturistic view. Selecting what elements are salient when one presents “rhetoric their importance and pertinency to the discussion are implied” (Vatz 157), therefore effectively discarding nature, or exigence, for determining rhetoric. “The second step in communicating ‘situations’ is the translation of the chosen information into meaning” (Vatz 157). Therefore, the rhetor becomes the crux for creating the situation and subsequent steps through content salience, and not the vice versa that Bitzer argues, placing a huge burden on the rhetor to communicate effectively with the audience.

The statement “To view rhetoric as a creation of reality or salience rather than a reflector of reality clearly increases the rhetor's moral responsibility” (Vatz 158) further solidifies Vatz’s stance against Bitzer. Rhetors must correctly assume this responsibility using salience to finish the three constituents Bitzer outlines. This shifts the power of influence from the situation to the rhetor and places accountability for the outcome solely on the elements the rhetor chooses.  Salience pieces together the critical elements within the rhetorical puzzle, “thus rhetoric is a cause not an effect of meaning” (Vatz 160).