presented information by way of inferences (Ellis and Hunt 1999). Comprehension thus involves both top-down and bottom-up processes, as general themes guide the audience’s inferential processes and stimulus characteristics suggest how the information should be interpreted (cf. Bartlett 1932).

Say, if a product is positioned as *heart healthy* consumers are likely to infer missing attribute values consistent with this positioning message (e.g., low in fat, cholesterol, sodium, etc.) (Andrews, Netemeyer and Burton 1998). The theme serves as a category prime that leads consumers to infer attributes typically associated with the category (cf. Rosch 1978). When general superiority statements or puffery are part of the positioning strategy, consumers will tend to infer that the sponsor outperforms the competition on such attributes, even if attribute claims are made in a non-comparative format (cf. Landy and Sigall 1974; Beckwith and Lehman 1975; Nisbett and Wilson 1977). Consumers will also infer superiority on non-featured attributes in a manner consistent with the explicit superiority statements (Pecharmn 1996). Similarly, attribute claims used to position the brand may suggest to consumers the presence of other related attributes and benefits (Dick, Chakravarti and Biehal 1990). Explicit attribute claims will *activate* thoughts about other closely associated attributes, and their increased accessibility will guide inferences about such attributes (Collins and Quillian 1972; Collins and Loftus 1975).

Finally, in Barone and Miniards’ second study, which they claim presents the strongest evidence for priming versus inferences, the target and prime were presented separately on different pages. Since a copy by copy interaction refers to the influence of