Going into Business with the One that you Love:

Using a dramaturgical framework to explore couples' experience of copreneurial micro-business

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Thesis submitted to Lancaster University Management School for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

October 2014

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Angela Carradus, MA (Management Learning and Leadership) Lancaster

Abstract

This thesis offers a new conceptualisation of copreneurship by developing a dramaturgical framework. Whilst this theatrical concept of the social construction of entrepreneurship forms a small part of the debate in the extant literature, to date there has been no specific focus on the copreneurial dynamic. The thesis argues that a theatrical approach provides an additional means of interpreting the copreneurial experience. This is where couples articulate the ways in which they perform socially embedded practices such as marriage and family alongside managing a micro-business. It supports the notion of adopting a multidisciplinary approach to interpretation of such an intimate dynamic where the public and the private are often combined. Analysis of the narratives will show how performing within a spousal construct creates a business where connection and trust perform a central role in the creation of a copreneurial drama.

This thesis supports the premise that interpretative phenomenological analysis is a powerful means of making sense of the copreneurial stories through this combined dramaturgical and relational approach. It contributes to knowledge in three important

ways. Firstly it examines the premise or motivation for creating a business with an 'intimate other' and offers new insight into approaches to the early stages of the copreneurial experience. Intimate spousal involvement in a copreneurial business reveals the complexities of performing within a stereotypical framework where each partner faces an ideological dilemma in rewriting their intimate, spousal story. It highlights the complexity of managing the relational side to their business and domestic lives. It emphasises the interlinked, gendered relationships for spouses involved in copreneurial business, and questions the continued individualistic, malestream discourse on entrepreneurship in the family business and entrepreneurship literature. Secondly, there is a focus on the role of women in the business by providing a framework to explore a relational approach (Miller, 1977) to new venture creation and business development.

Finally, this thesis offers a new insight for policy makers into the copreneurial dynamic of couples who represent a high proportion of micro-business in the UK, highlighting particular needs during start-up and business development. It also offers couples choosing to go into business together a new conceptual framework to help guide their copreneurial experience.

Acknowledgements

This thesis was undertaken at a time of great change in my life as I have moved from a business partnership with my husband to full time academia. I am indebted to many people for helping to make this research possible, particularly the participants whose generous honesty has been invaluable.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to my supervisors Professor Eleanor Hamilton and Professor Caroline Gatrell who have provided patient wisdom and guidance throughout this PhD journey. They continue to be an inspiration both personally and to my developing research life, and I would not have been able to get to the end without them.

I would like to thank my colleagues in the Institute for Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development at Lancaster University Management School who have provided invaluable support. I owe particular gratitude to Dr Ricardo Zozimo whose laughter and energy kept me going in the low times. Thank's must also go to Dr Allan Discua Cruz and Dr Edward McKeever whose critical support and practical encouragement has helped to move my work forward, particularly in the early stages.

I am indebted to my friends particularly Elaine Theobold, Roger Porthouse, Rob Funning, Kevin Beveridge and my late friend Janice Garside who have spent many hours helping me to see through the mist.

I am grateful to my family for their love and encouragement. To my parents who continue to inspire me through their own entrepreneurial and personal stories. Finally, to my daughter Izzy and husband Alan who have walked the family business path with me, thank you for being there in the darkness and the sunshine.

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Chapter 1

Chapter 1-Introduction

1.1 Aims and Objectives of this study-The researchers story

1.2 The copreneur as the smallest measure of family business

1.3 Performing a new identity

1.4 What this study aims to achieve

1.5 Why carry out this study now?

1.6 Overview of the chapters

Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1 Aims and objectives of this study - The researcher's story

Alice is very animated as she describes the moment when she knew that she had started to go into labour with her second child. It could not have come at a more inconvenient time, as she was mid-way through rewriting a report for a needy client. This was not a problem, as she knew that she had a window of opportunity that would enable her to finish what she was doing before heading off to the hospital. However, things were made a little more complicated when the client insisted on debating a new addition to the report, and Alice did not feel able to explain that she was in the early stages of labour.

Simon acknowledged that he made sure that things were running smoothly to enable Fern to carry on working in the office at home. He took great joy in the weekly visits from their granddaughter who would spend time with him whilst Fern finished her work for the day before joining them for an afternoon adventure. Running their business from home had given them a freedom that had not been possible prior to starting their own business.

Verity admitted that she sat and cried some nights over her feelings of guilt over not spending more time with the children. Co-directing a business with her husband and developing her own holiday company had left her little time to balance her life with her family and the business.

Copreneurial venture continues to be an area of limited study particularly with regard to couple interaction both at work and at home (Bensemann & Hall, 2010; de Bruin & Lewis, 2004; Danes and Jang, 2013; Danes and Olson, 2003; Fletcher; 2010;

Marshack, 1993; 1994). It is a relatively new area of research with the first reference made to the dynamic in the 1980's (Barnett and Barnett, 1988; Krupa & Kirk-Kuwaye, 1987; Nelton, 1986). Historically couples have often managed their household labour together (Davidoff & Hall, 2002; Pahl, 1984; Popp, 2012), but distinction between paid and unpaid work is a recent post-industrial addition to the classification of what constitutes work in western civilisations. Davidoff & Hall (1987) explore the debates on the public and private spheres, particularly for middle class people. They suggest that the separation is often not so clear-cut and highlight many occasions where there are the *"crossings of boundaries"*. This thesis will contribute to this debate by demonstrating how many of the copreneurs in this study articulate such a blurring of their public and private worlds.

This research began as a personal inquiry having being part of a copreneurial venture with my husband for three years, whilst also studying for an MA in Management Learning and Leadership. This developed a particular interest in the literature examining the gender ideologies and roles of couples who choose to own and run a business together. A number of the articles and books talked about the *"invisible or hidden role"* woman often play in family business (Cole, 1997; 2000; Hamilton, 2006; Hochschild & Machung, 2003; Howorth, Rose, Hamilton, & Westhead 2010). This is explored in detail in Chapter 3. Reference has been made to the *"emotional labour"* of women (Hamilton, 2006; Poza and Messer, 2001), but not to any great extent the relational role that women are performing within family business (Venter, Farrington & Boshoff, 2009).

This study will show that the copreneurial micro-businesses involved in this study articulate how they are performing both traditional and non-traditional gender roles. This is particularly apparent for the female participants who show how their relational

competency is central to the creation of a copreneurial business embedded in relational values. In her work on relational competence in organizations Jordon, (2004: 15) suggests that this occurs when people are able to affect change in the relationships of other's lives or *"effect wellbeing"* in all of the people involved. It does not depend on one person holding power over another person, but sharing power with that person in a *"mutually empowering"* way. That is to say, the couples articulate how they are drawing on an approach that is often considered to be a traditional female approach of *"self in relation"* (Jordan, 2004: 1), where connection to others is central. This presents a new way of considering the ways in which people enact entrepreneurship.

This thesis explores the relationship between business and the home using a tripartite theoretical approach, drawing on dramaturgy (Goffman, 1990), gender, (Bird and Brush, 2002), and family embeddedness, (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003) perspectives to create a new framework to examine the copreneurial experience. It will help to re-evaluate the current discourse on the public and the private, which continues to be the preferred way of looking at the social-cultural interface of work and home (Davidoff & Hall, 2002; Fletcher, 2012; Gamber, 1998; Gilligan, 1982). This study takes a different approach to research on entrepreneurship, which currently views *"business as the most important system under study, even to the exclusion of the family in its own right within the family business literature"* (Rogoff and Heck, 2003: 560).

Smith, Flowers & Larkin, (2009: 29) suggest that, an interpretative and idiographic approach enables the researcher to first examine particular details from individual participant stories, and then look at the broader phenomenon that may highlight "*more general claims"*. They draw attention to the opinion that *"[...] idiography does not askew generalizations, but rather prescribes a different way of establishing those*

generalizations" (p.29). This detailed approach to studying how couples articulate their copreneurial experience will offer a more nuanced insight into the creation of this smallest unit of family business (Blenkinsopp & Owens, 2010).

1.2 The copreneur as the smallest measure of family business

Copreneurial business represents 36% of private sector business in the UK (Great Britain. FSB member survey, 2013; 2014). The term copreneur was coined by Barnett and Barnett (1988) and refers to couples who share *"a marital or pseudo-marital link who share ownership of, commitment to, and responsibility for a venture"* (Marshack, 1993) and own more than 50% of the business (Tompson and Tompson, 2000). The extant literature continues to consider this business dynamic in terms of a broader family business perspective, presenting woman in a supportive and often invisible role (Casson, Young, Basu & Wadeson, 2006; Heinonen & Stenholm, 2011; Lewis & Massey, 2011). A position that Ogbor (2000: 621) suggests, *"[...] pervades theoretical constructions"* of entrepreneurship in current research.

1.3 What this study aims to achieve

This study aims to develop a new understanding of the copreneurial experience drawing on a dramaturgical perspective (Anderson, 2005; Goffman, 1990). This will form part of a multi-theoretical approach. It intends to highlight the important role that intimately linked couples perform in the creation of a family business. Intimacy in this context will refer to the private dimensions of the spousal relationship where couples in the study have articulated the intrusion of their business lives into their private spaces such as, the marital bed. It will also highlight the intimacies of the couple's parental lives as they discuss the difficulties of caring for young children alongside

their business duties. It offers a more nuanced, multi-theoretical interpretation of the spousal dynamic, which has important implications for policy.

Current debate continues to acknowledge that, due to the *"lack of data"* copreneurial business continues to be under explored (Dyer, Dyer & Gardner, 2013; Fitzgerald & Muske, 2002; Marshack, 1993; 1994). Micro-business is one of the rising areas of private sector employment currently in the UK. Looking at the figures on micro-business with no employees it could be argued that, if each of these businesses employed one person approximately 3.6 million more jobs would be created in the UK based on the DBIS (2012) figures. This would make a substantial difference both socially and economically in the UK.

1.4 Why carry out this study now?

This study has been carried out during an economic downturn in the UK where the employment market is changing. Such flux for some through necessity due to redundancy or for others the need to be in control of their future has led to an increase in entrepreneurial activity in the UK. As identified in (Table 1, p.16) a substantial number of these businesses are micro with the potential for the business to be a copreneurial partnership based on the worldwide figures (Fitzgerald & Muske, 2002; Great Britain. FSB member survey, 2014). Gaining a greater understanding of such businesses will aid us in our ability to target their specific needs when exploring growth and long-term options. Currently such businesses struggle to access development processes due to cost and time restrictions. Particular targeting of resources and government or private sector funding may help to enable copreneurial micro-business to identify opportunities for growth.

The aim of this thesis will be to develop an understanding of how *relational competencies* (Jordon, 2004) between couples can aid, inform or hinder how they carry out their working and domestic activities in a copreneurial micro-business. To achieve this aim this study will draw on literature outside of family business and entrepreneurship literature. Exploration of psychological and sociological perspectives enables this researcher to develop a more in-depth understanding of the part that the social construction of marriage and family play on the copreneurial phenomena. Wilshire (1991) suggests that drawing on multiple perspectives enables us as philosophers to explore the creation of human life. A growing body of literature has investigated the role of the family on entrepreneurial activity (Aldrich and Cliff, 2003; Baines *et al.*, 2003) but has failed to explore the copreneurial dynamic in any detail (Fletcher, 2010: 453). This thesis will contribute both methodologically and theoretically to a more in-depth understanding of the copreneurial phenomenon.

1.5 Overview of the chapters

The thesis presents three main sections (Fig. 1, p.13) Chapters 2, 3 and 4 contain the literature review. Chapter 5 examines the methodology and Chapters 6, 7 and 8 present the analysis of the empirical data. Chapter 9 will conclude the thesis and discuss any future research and recommendations for practitioners and legislation.

1.5.1 Chapter 2: Research relating to copreneurs

Chapter 2 introduces the family business literature and highlights the lack of consideration of the spousal dynamic. Family business plays a large role in national and international economies of the world acknowledged by the growing debates around family business in the extant literature. It is apparent however, that research continues to neglect the social, psychological and historical elements of such

businesses. In particular there has been little exploration of the intimate spousal dynamic (Matzek, Gudmunson and Danes, 2010; Poza and Messer, 2001). This study highlights the importance of incorporating these dimensions into the on-going debates around the interweaving of work and home for such businesses. Literature outside of family business and entrepreneurship will add further dimensions of understanding to the links between work and home for family business research. Chapter 2 will explore both conceptual and theoretical approaches to copreneurial business research in the literature, and conclude with an exploration of the current debates on the role of women in family business.

1.5.2 Chapter 3 Gender, power and relational practice

Chapter 3 explores the question of female visibility in family business drawing on the entrepreneurial and family business literature. It introduces the historical context of the family unit through literature focussing on the social construction of work and home. Exploration of the current theoretical debates on gender role, identity and power in feminist literature provides a more detailed understanding of the spousal dynamic and the important role that women perform. This challenges the traditional view of family business that focusses on conflict and the tensions caused by working with an intimate other (Danes & Olson, 2003; Danes & Morgan, 2004). It introduces the notion that copreneurial business is fundamentally relational in nature starting with the work of Miller (1977) to introduce the concept of entrepreneurship embedded in connection to others. Finally, the chapter considers the literature exploring dilemmas around gender ideologies and roles of spouses, highlighting the importance of using a multiple perspective approach to understanding copreneurial experience.

1.5.3 Chapter 4: Using dramaturgy to explore copreneurial business

Chapter 4 introduces a dramaturgical perspective to support the conceptualisation of the copreneurial experience. It draws heavily on the work of Goffman (1990) and Egri (1960) to support the notion that human beings socially construct characters, roles and scenes in which they perform their daily lives. It highlights the underutilization of this analytical approach in the entrepreneurship and family business literature. The chapter highlights the strong links between gender and performative perspectives by examining a multiple perspective approach.

1.5.4 Chapter 5: Methodology

Chapter 5 splits into two sections. The first part provides a detailed explanation of the philosophical journey of the researcher, culminating in the choice to use a multiple perspective approach. This chapter will introduce the use of a theatrical writing framework (Egri, 1960) as a novel approach to creating a conceptual framework to examine copreneurial experience. It draws on a performative perspective (Butler, 1990; Goffman, 1990) to explore the way in which the intimately linked couples have rewritten their daily lives to become copreneurs. The second part of the chapter will offer a detailed explanation of the method of data gathering and analysis using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). This draws on interviews with fourteen copreneurial micro-businesses. It acknowledges the place of the researcher in the sense making process during analysis using (IPA) offering insight into the research journey. This chapter provides the basis for developing a new conceptual approach to understanding the copreneurial experience idiographically.

1.5.5 Chapter 6: Identifying the premise for copreneurial business

Chapter 6 develops the dramaturgical approach to interpreting the data. It demonstrates how interpretation of the narratives highlights the ways in which the couples articulate their premise or reason for becoming copreneurs. This approach informed the overall thematic structure of the analysis. It highlights how the couples perform within their socially constructed and gendered lives when making the decisions around the business and domestic domains. It will place their intimate relationship at the centre of the analysis drawing on sociological and psychological literature to develop a broader understanding of how the couple relationship is fundamental to the business and the home. Vignettes of the couples introduce the individual stories showing how the analysis led to a number of interrelated themes running through the study. These super-ordinate themes inform the next two chapters paying particular attention to female visibility and the inextricable link between the business and domestic.

1.5.6 Chapter 7: Creating the pivotal characters using a dramaturgical approach

Chapter 7 introduces the pivotal characters and examines the gender ideologies of the couples. This novel approach to interpretation offers a new way of understanding the entrepreneurial experience. It highlights how the couples articulate their experiences of combining a business with their personal lives to form a third relational sphere. It explores the current thinking behind relational theory and identifies the difficulties of applying it to a business context embedded in a patriarchal framework. It draws on a feminist concept of power to illustrate how the couples often articulate a different approach to managing power within their spousal and broader relationships. This will

highlight the impact that such an approach can have on the copreneurial experience for many of the couples. This chapter highlights how the ideological dilemmas faced by many of the couples influences the ways in which they create and manage their copreneurial business. This draws attention to the important role that the women play in such a business dynamic and challenges the current hegemonic position often casting the women in the role of supportive spouse. Therefore, this chapter challenges the current understanding of family business and entrepreneurship.

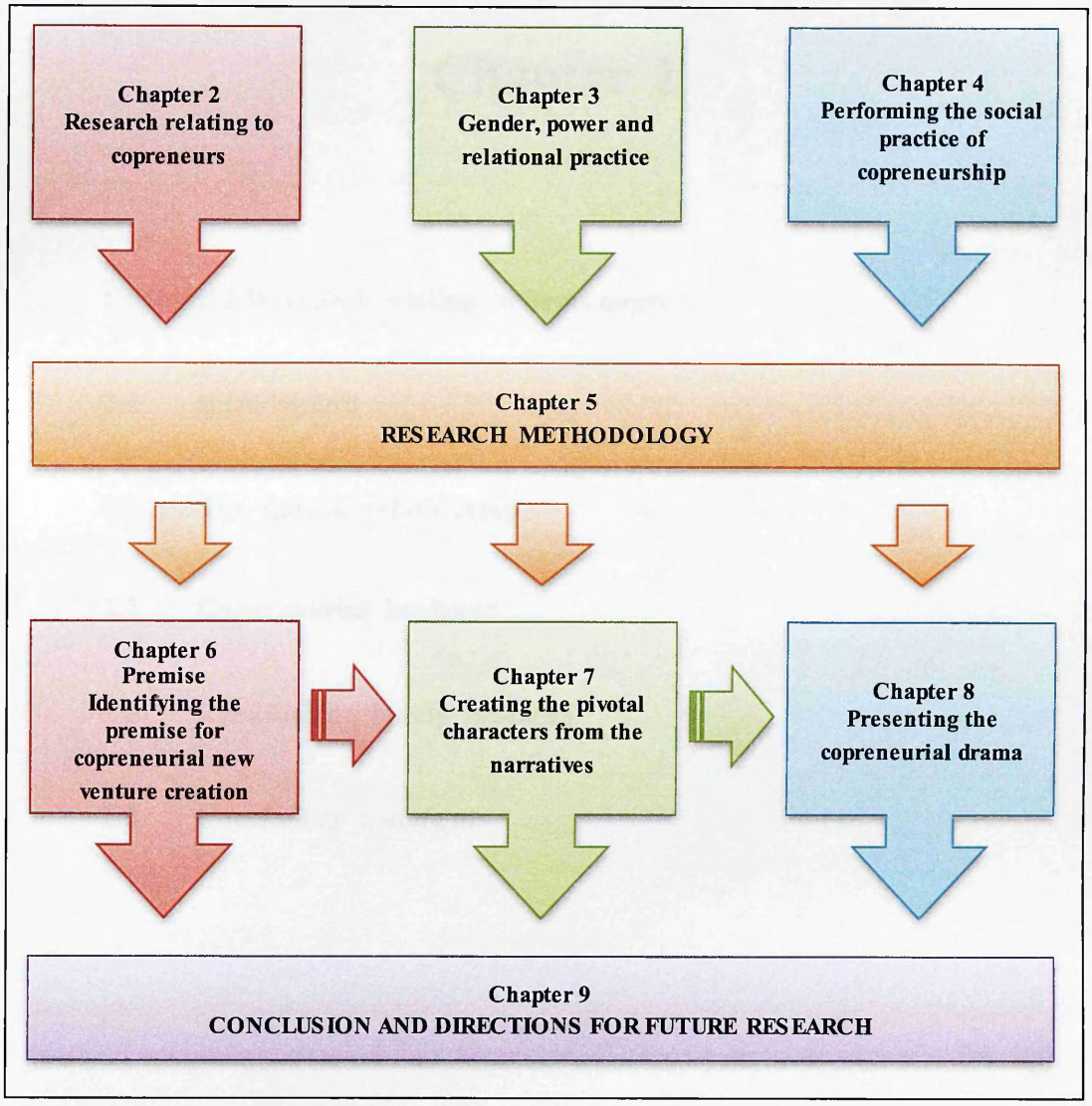
1.5.7 Chapter 8: Presenting the copreneurial drama

Chapter 8 draws heavily on the framework of Egri (1960) to present the copreneurial narratives as a series of conceptual dramas. Here the analysis critically explores current predominant understanding of family business as autonomous, conflicted and embedded in a masculine approach to entrepreneurship. It highlights how many of the couples articulate their copreneurial journey as one of mutual empowering in contrast to current organisational discourse on power as something held over others. It illustrates the complexities of managing spousal and family ideologies within the construct of the couple's copreneurial lives. This chapter draws attention to the issues around the dichotomy of business and home when they are often under the same roof. It highlights the importance of understanding the various challenges faced by such couples over time in their domestic domain during the creation and development of their copreneurial businesses. Interpretation of the narratives highlights the various ways in which the couples reconstruct their new copreneurial lives within the constraints of their gender ideologies. It illustrates the dilemmas faced by such couples who articulate the difficulties of balancing their personal spousal and family needs alongside their very public roles as co-owners of a business.

1.5.8 Chapter 9: Conclusions and recommendations

Chapter 9 presents the conclusions of the thesis. It draws together the original purpose of the research and emphasises the contribution both methodologically and theoretically to the copreneurial debate. It illustrates the benefit to using a multiple perspective approach to exploring copreneurial business. It discusses the limitations of the study and highlights ways in which the work can develop. The chapter will conclude with suggestions for practitioners, researchers and advisors and make any recommendations for future research.

Figure 1: Structure of the thesis



Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Research relating to copreneurs

2.1 Introduction

2.2 The spousal relationship

2.3 Copreneurial business

2.4 Research on family business

2.5 Concluding comments

Chapter 2 Research relating to copreneurs

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will introduce a critical overview of the current debates around copreneurial business. It will draw on both the family business and entrepreneurship literature to examine the argument around the need to consider work and home as linked when considering copreneurial micro-businesses. This review finds that there is little emphasis on developing an understanding of the complexities of working with an intimate other, and the *"couple context"* (Danes & Jang, 2013: 45) of a copreneurial business.

Current figures compiled by the Department for Business Innovation Skills (2012) on private sector enterprise in the UK, shows that private sector business has increased year on year since 2000. Businesses with no employees currently stands at just under 3.6 million, representing *"74.2 per cent of all private sector business in the UK"* (p.3) (Table 1, p.16) and just over one million businesses with 1-9 employees which indicates that micro-business in the UK plays a significant part in the private sector (George, Soetano & Hamilton, 2011).

Estimated number of businesses in the UK private sector and their associated employment and turnover by size of business, UK private sector, start of 2012

	Businesses	Employment *thousands*	Turnover[1] *£ millions*
All businesses	4,794,105	23,893	3,131,549
SMEs (0-249 employees	4,787,650	14,130	1,528,679
All employers	1,236,850	19,991	2,923,744
With no employees[2]	3,557,255	3,902	207,805
1-9	1,022,695	3,848	416,162
10-49	177,950	3,471	454,327
50-249	29,750	2,909	450,384
250 or more	6,455	9,763	1,602,870

1: "All Industries" turnover figures exclude Section K (financial and insurance activities) and Division 78 (employment activities) where turnover is not available on a comparable basis.

2: "With no employees" comprises sole proprietorships and partnerships comprising only the self-employed owner-manager(s), and companies comprising only an employee director.

Table 1 Source: (Department of Business Innovation and Skills: Business Population Estimates, 2012-13)

Figures show that over 95.5% of UK private sector business can be categorised as a micro-business employing nine or less (Lord Young Report, 2013: 7). Whilst the figures provide us with the overall measure of how many micro-businesses exist in the UK there are no detailed figures providing us with the number of copreneurial ventures that are currently trading. The closest we are able to come currently is the Great Britain. FSB member survey, (2014: 6) which identified that 36% of self-employed businesses in the UK have and equal male/female ownership.

The current economic down turn in many countries is leading to more people having to forge their own employment path encouraging some couples to start up a business with their spouse. Currently government level research on micro-business is in the

early stages of development in the UK. The government has currently published the All Party Parliamentary Group for Micro Businesses, (2011) and Lord Young Report (2013). Both reports acknowledge the importance of micro-businesses to the British economy and have identified that such businesses would benefit from targeted academic study, funding and training. Micro-business is one of the rising areas of private sector employment currently in the UK.

Looking at the figures on micro-business with no employees (Fig. 2) it could be argued that if each of these businesses employed one person approximately 3.6 million new jobs would be made available in the UK based on the current figures (DBIS, 2012). This would make a substantial difference both socially and economically in the UK.

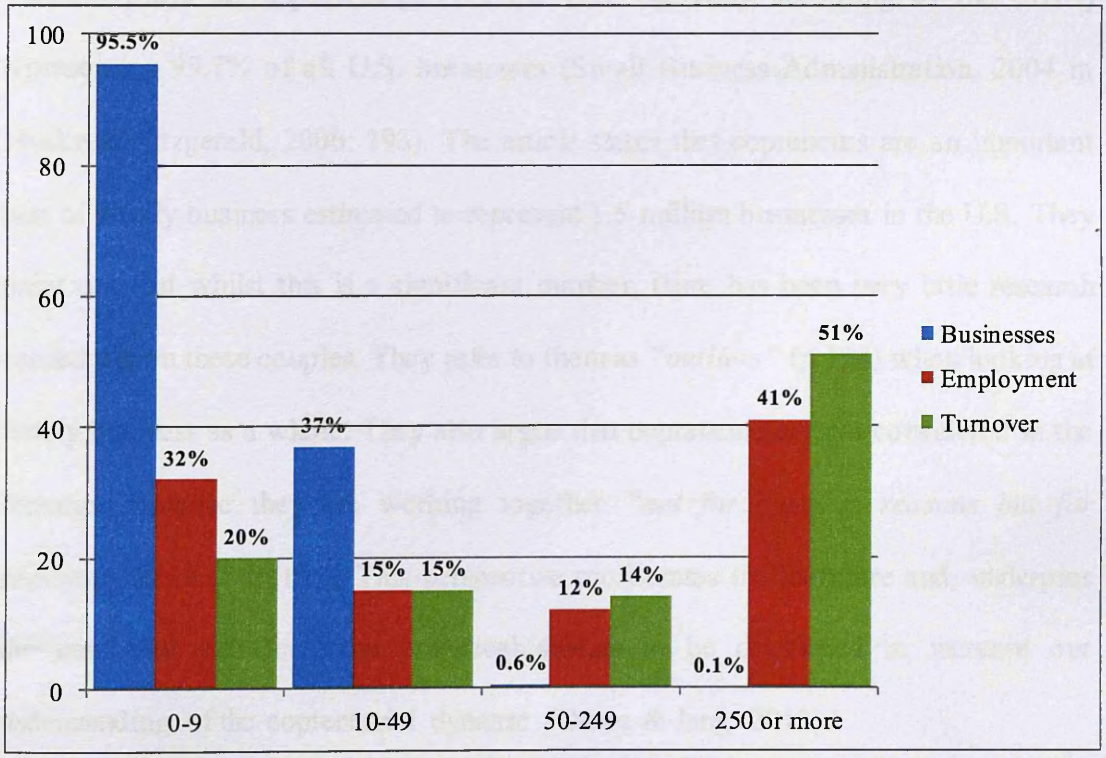


Figure 2: Lord Young Report 2013 (Source: BIS Population Estimates for the UK and Regions 2012)

The Lord Young report (2013) highlights the need for greater engagement with micro-businesses through legislation and academic interaction. This supports the NIACE report (2012) carried for the Department for Innovation and Skills that calls for greater engagement with UK micro-businesses. Currently such businesses struggle to access development and training due to cost, ability to source support and time restrictions. Particular targeting of resources and government and private sector funding may help to enable micro-business to identify opportunities for learning and growth.

Muske and Fitzgerald (2006) discuss the increase in interest in small business start-up and closure in the USA. The paper highlights the figures provided by the Small Business Administration (SBA) estimating that, 38% of the ventures started over a six-year period will survive (Muske & Fitzgerald, 2006: 193). Small and family business plays an important part in the U.S. economy according to the (SBA) representing 99.7% of all U.S. businesses (Small Business Administration, 2004 in Muske & Fitzgerald, 2006: 193). The article states that copreneurs are an important part of family business estimated to represent 1.5 million businesses in the U.S. They point out that whilst this is a significant number, there has been very little research carried out on these couples. They refer to them as *"outliers"* (p.194) when looking at family business as a whole. They also argue that copreneurs are not considered in the literature because they are working together *"not for business reasons but for personal reasons"* (p.194). This perspective proliferates the literature and, underpins the continued call for more empirical studies to be developed to increase our understanding of the copreneurial dynamic (Danes & Jang, 2013).

2.2 The spousal relationship

This section will explore current research on spouses who own and manage their own businesses, and for the purposes of this study, spouse will refer to an intimately linked heterosexual or same sex person who is married or cohabiting with their partner. The family business research generally refers to the family system (Howorth, Rose, Hamilton & Westhead, 2010) and not specifically to the intimate spousal relationship. It is now commonly understood that research into family business should not be undertaken without including family processes in the research (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003), but the spousal dynamic continues to play an invisible role in the major debates around entrepreneurship and family business. This is particularly apparent when considering the role that the female spouse plays in a family business. In order to develop a greater depth of understanding of the copreneurial dynamic this thesis will explore sociological and psychological perspectives on what constitutes a modern spousal relationship, and how this understanding can help inform the research on copreneurs in the family business and entrepreneurship literature.

2.2.1 The sociology of marriage

Gottman (2009: 1) observes that: *"Marriage is perhaps the most commonplace of human social relationships. The interaction of married couples is an everyday occurrence. It is always underfoot, available for observation in every restaurant and shopping mall and private settings. Yet despite its ubiquity, it generally is ignored".*

This observation summarises the current approach adopted in the entrepreneurship and family business literature, paying nominal attention to the intimate spousal dynamic. It highlights the contribution that this thesis can make by adopting sociological and psychological perspectives to examine the place that the intimate spousal relationship

plays in the copreneurial micro-business in family business and entrepreneurship research. Currently the intimate couple relationship plays an invisible role with research continuing to direct the research towards a single patriarchal entrepreneurial leader, who is usually male (Hamilton, 2006). This highlights the contribution that literature outside of family business and entrepreneurship can make to understanding the copreneurial micro-business. Smart (2007) highlights that intimate relationships are embedded in emotion and founded in love which she suggests has been absent from sociological research for many years. She discusses the feminist approaches that have been *"attentive to emotions"* (p.53) and draws attention to the growing discourse on emotion looking at a number of approaches including phenomenology that explores the way emotion is *"generated through the interaction with others"* (p.56). This is a feminine attribute, and contra to the accepted discourse on entrepreneurship. Such discourse, argues Lewis (2006: 455) highlights *"the invisibility of the masculinity embedded in entrepreneurial activities such that 'entrepreneur' and 'male'* have become interchangeable terms. Bruni, Gherardi and Poggio (2004: 1) state that:

> *"Doing business is a social practice and so too is 'doing gender', but the latter is less evident than the former because common sense attributes gender to the corporeality of persons and therefore to their being, rather than their doing".*

It could be argued that to determine how an intimate spousal relationship recreates itself to become copreneurial we must first understand the ways in which the spousal *"being"* (Heidegger, 1962) is socially constructed, and how this influences the reconstruction of paid and unpaid work.

Marshack (1993) presents copreneurship as the combining of the two worlds of love and work that are *"inextricably intertwined"* (p.355). She observed in her comparative research into dual-career couples and copreneurs that, dual-career couples were able to achieve greater equality in their distribution of domestic tasks, whereas the copreneurial wives were playing a stereotypical role within the marital and business relationship. Marshack (1993) saw the blurring of the line between work and home as a position that leads couples to *"rely on a conceptual boundary"* (p.63) which would enable the couple to keep work and home separate. She concurred with the family business field of research highlighting the *"invisibility of wives"* (p.64) as leaders in the businesses but the crucial role that they play in enabling the business and home to function. Marshack (1994) uses a comparative study to look at dual career couples and copreneurs, drawing attention to the lack of research on couples who own and manage a business together. (p.49). Dual career couples demonstrated a more equitable work/home balance in comparison to the copreneurs. The copreneurs *"espoused a much more stereotypical sex-role orientation"* (p.62). Whilst the wives were performing non-traditional tasks in the work place such as, sales and business planning, the husbands were not performing a reciprocal role in the home. Marshack (1994) determined that due to the blurring of the line between work and home copreneurs differentiated between their gender role differences (Eddleston & Powell, 2012; Fitzgerald & Muske, 2002; Poza & Messer, 2001; Vadnjal & Zupan, 2009;), *"[...] to construct boundaries between the husband and wife"* (Marshack, 1994: 64). This produced a *"closed system"* (Hamilton, 2006: 255). This reinforced the stereotypical position of the women both at work and at home.

Research into the copreneurial phenomena continues to be at an early stage (Danes & Jang, 2013) particularly on new venture creation and the relational perspective of

working with an intimate other. Studies have looked at various aspects of copreneurial business, many of which continue to treat entrepreneurship and the family as two separate areas for consideration (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). Entrepreneurship is something done in relationship to many things including *"financial resources, human resources, education, economic conditions and family"* (Rogoff and Heck, 2003: 559). They consider how research has *"sidestepped"* the inclusion of family in research and, taking this a step further, the spousal relationship and entrepreneurship in a research context is almost completely none existent.

Danes (2011) suggests that the current literature on *"the couple relationship"* has a linear approach to examining spousal conflict, support and effects on new venture creation and business success. They ask us to look deeper than simply accepting that marriage is an indication of how couples will interact in business together. She suggests that to ensure that we are getting a more in-depth representation of how such a dynamic can work in new business venture then we need to carry out longitudinal study on the couple, and possibly other family members also. In a study carried out by Matzek, Gudmunson and Danes (2010), they showed that *"greater family involvement lead to fewer months to break even and higher relationship quality"* (Danes, 2011: 3). In their study examining the effect of spousal support in new venture creation (Gudmunson, Danes, Werbel & Loy, 2009) highlight the importance of understanding the part that stress plays in the couple dynamic and Danes and Yang (2013: 31) discuss the part that shared cognition has on the formation of *"collective"* copreneurial characters. They discuss spousal commitment and state that:

> *"Spousal commitment influences entrepreneur's attitudes, resources, and motivation toward the firm, all of which fuel the entrepreneur's energy resources to facilitate business success...However, spousal commitment is not*

> *an all-or-none phenomena; rather it is a continuum that changes over time or with circumstances either in the firm or family system"* (p. 47).

Currently the focus for studies on entrepreneurs working with an intimate other have predominantly concentrated on the family perspective with the marital aspect of the business playing a minor role. Emphasis is on entrepreneurial teams (Hedberg & Danes, 2012); women's visibility (Lewis & Massey, 2011; Vadnjal & Zupan, 2009), self-employment (Baines & Wheelock, 1998), lifestyle business, (Bensemann & Hall, 2010) business start-up (Birley & Westhead, 1994; Fletcher, 2010) comparison between other family business (Fitzgerald & Muske, 2002), conflict (Danes & Morgan, 2004; Fitzgerald & Muske, 2002), marriage breakdown, (Cole & Johnson, 2007) and spousal capital (Matzek, Gudmunson & Danes, 2010).

Danes (2011) draws our attention to the current theoretical perspectives and suggests that new approaches need developing to explore the copreneurial dynamic with a particular emphasis on how couples interact together. She recommends that we look at *"spousal resources"* and how they can help or hinder a business *"over time"* (Matzek *et.al.*, 2010). Danes (2011:3) also suggest that greater spousal involvement can make a positive contribution to a new business venture and that:

> *"...spouses working in business venture to a greater degree experienced more firm dedication from their spouse which ultimately led to fewer months to break even and higher relationship quality. This mutual sustainability of business and couple relationship is critical in defining new venture success".*

Danes and Morgan (2004) discuss the increased need for therapeutic support for business owning couples and they recommend Emotionally Focussed Therapy (EFT) which pays greater regard to the complexities of a couple who own and manage a

business together. They concur with current debate suggesting the inextricable link between work and home for copreneurs needs consideration when undertaking therapy for couple conflict. The paper discusses the work of McClendon and Kadis (1991) who refer to family business owners as *"interdependent"*. They are required to take into account the emotional implications of their relationship with other family members within the business. To sustain the dual relationship Danes and Morgan (2004) suggest that: *"a synthesis between the family and the business systems needs to be achieved and maintained"* (p.243).The family business needs to define each position performed by family members clearly to avoid a build-up of dissatisfaction and conflict.

2.2.2 The family system and creating a copreneurial business

Smith-Acuña (2011) discusses the benefit to using multiple theoretical perspectives when examining the intimate spousal relationship and the functioning of the family unit. She suggests that the psychological approach of systems theory enables the researcher or practitioner to implement this as a tool to break down the system under investigation into its component parts and draws attention to the concept of *"nonsummativity, a term used to describe the phenomenon that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts"*. (Watzlawick, Bavelas, & Jackson in Smith-Acuña, 2011:15). Aldrich and Cliff (2003) examine the family system in their study of family business and argue that to understand family business as a whole we must first examine the family structures embedded in their day-to-day lives. They argue that family business research cannot separate the family from the business.

Morgan (1996: 17) discusses *"the actual practices of the personal"* and asks us to consider if *"the personal is socially constructed"*. Smart, (2007) looks at the role

sociology plays in examining family life and the personal, discusses individualisation theory and the changing face of the family unit and kinship. May (2011: 2), asks us to consider *"what is sociological about personal life, that is, what individual people's personal lives say about society more generally."* She introduces us to the work of Mills (1959) amongst others and discusses how Mills saw important areas of study such as gender equality as matters for in-depth understanding. He suggested that:

> "*Public issues such as gender equality cannot be understood in the abstract, but must instead be viewed in terms of relationships between individual men and women in the home or workplace. Therefore sociology must include in its studies both troubles and issues, both biography and history, and a range of their intricate relations".* (Mills in May, 2011: 3)

Mason explores the changing face of the family and kinship and suggests that in a complex and changing world family does not always mean intimately linked by blood. She refers to Morgan's work in (1976) where he suggests that family and kinship is something that we *"do"*, and that:

> *"[...] people are engaged in living 'the ordinary complexity of kinship' the need for public recognition of one's own kinship group and arrangements can become very important".* (2011: 70).

For the copreneurs in this study, their kinship links were important to them and provided additional help with childcare and in some instances the provision of free labour.

Currently research suggest that, either working with a spouse is positive and advantageous for both the working and home environment (Danco, 1981; Jones &

Jones, 2001; Krupa & Kirk-Kuwaye, 1987; Nelton, 1986), or such businesses develop negative and destructive practices that can have a detrimental effect on both the business and family involved (Danes and Olson, 2003). By concentrating on the relational perspective on married and co-habiting couples who run a business together greater insight can be gained into both the positive and the negative aspects to the copreneurial dynamic. Literature suggests that the family should be at the heart of the study into family business (Blenkinsopp & Owens, 2010; Gudmunson *et al.,* 2009) with the copreneurial unit being the smallest measure of such businesses. (Blenkinsopp & Owens, 2010: 359). Currently such business in the UK falls under the remit of the SME, which does not necessarily acknowledge the particular complexities and needs of businesses that often consist of the two partners only. Such small companies may not currently have the resources or knowledge to access the public programmes they require to grow both personally and professionally.

Baines, Wheelock and Gelder (2003) in their study on self-employed parents found a number of issues regarding the complexity of combining work and home. They were examining government policy on self-employment developing insight through a qualitative approach into the relationship between entrepreneurship and parental relationships. In particular, they considered experiences at business start–up alongside a desire for greater work-life balance (Kirkwood & Tootell, 2008). They suggested that there is a need to understand the relationship between the desire to be self-employed alongside the need to balance *"parenting and family"* (p.10).

Gregory and Milner (2009: 2) warn of the use of the term *"Work-life balance"* they suggest that, *"balance suggests that work is not integral to life, and implies a simple trade-off between the two spheres"*. They highlight the danger of the two spheres

merging to the detriment of *"personal life"* an issue explored throughout this thesis as the couples narrate the complexities of balancing their business and personal lives.

Danes and Olson (2003) discuss the complexities of a family who choose to develop a business together. Their quantitative study consisted of telephone interviews. The study explored the increasing concern that conflict may be the fastest growing area of concern in family business (Cosier & Harvey, 1998; Danes & Olson: 2003: 53). The article draws attention to the work of Hollander & Bukowitz (1990) who observed that family members who choose to work together have *"patterns of behaviour, values, beliefs and expectations [that] are often transferred to the family business"* (in Danes & Olson, 2003: 56).

2.3 Copreneurial business

It has long been established that entrepreneurial and family business literature can overlap when examining the family business dynamic (Hamilton, 2005). Couples who own and manage a business together have only recently appeared as a growing area of interest in business literature (Dyer, 2006; Dyer, Dyer & Gardner, 2013; Fitzgerald & Muske, 2002; Marshack, 1993; 1994). They are often referred to as, *"Copreneurs"* a term first used by Barnett and Barnett in (1988) or *"Mom and Pop"* businesses (Nelton, 1986). They define them as, couples that share the management of the business together and the running of the home. Marshack (1994) referred to copreneurs as a:

> *"...subset of dual career couples and a subset of family businesses, co-entrepreneurial couples represent a dynamic interaction of the systems of love and work"* (p.49).

Historically copreneurial business exists throughout the ages with couples having to interweave their lives with economic and domestic activity (Popp, 2012).

2.3.1 Understanding the copreneurial experience in the field of family business research

Fletcher (2010) explores the current research to-date on copreneurship and business start-ups. She draws attention to the continued lack of qualitative research carried out on this group of business owners often referred to as a *"Lifestyle businesses"*, (p.452) a term used to signify a business devoid of ambitions to grow and produce healthy profit. Tompson and Tompson (2000) suggest that one reason copreneurs are seldom studied is that they are "*outliers when the total business community is studied and thus of limited interest"* (p.194). This highlights the lack of consideration of the family dimension to many entrepreneurial endeavours (Chrisman, Chua and Sharma, 2003; Chrisman, Chua and Steier, 2003).

Fletcher (2010: 453) states the importance of carrying out research into this neglected area of family business and refers to the historical link where: *"many industrial empires have been built out of smaller personalized arrangements based on family and friends"*. She refers to the family embeddedness perspective of entrepreneurship as discussed by Aldrich and Cliff (2003) enabling greater depth to be added family business research (p.253). She also points to the studies carried exploring the dilemmas of gender role, power and work-family balance (Beauregard *et al.,* 2009; Barnett & Barnett, 1988; de Bruin, Brush & Walter, 2006; de Bruin & Lewis, 2004; Jaffe, 1990; Hamilton, 2006). Fletcher's (2010) article places emphasis on the entrepreneurial behaviour of the couples who according to her research *"focus on market work"*, and not the *"in love-in business"* (p.466).

Comparisons made in the Fitzgerald and Muske article (2002) between copreneurs and other family businesses draw attention to the limited study of copreneurs and suggests that this is due to the *"diversity of organizational structures and varying degrees of partnership"* (p.1). They suggest that confusion over the definition of copreneurs can complicate identification by researchers when analysing data (p.2). Many businesses continue to identify themselves as sole traders even when the spouse is playing a major role in the business. They suggest that this lack of clarity is problematic for the increasing research field that is not be able to use their findings in other studies. This will then decrease the 'generalizability of the findings' for practical implementation by consultancy practitioners (p.3).

The research demonstrates that there is a clear difference between copreneurs and other family businesses. They suggest that copreneurial business is more likely to *"home based and rural"* (Fitzgerald & Muske, 2002: 11) with the wife working more hours per year than in the family businesses. Copreneurs demonstrated that they saw their business as a way of making life choices that gave them more control over their own future and did not place monetary gain as their key goal for their lives. Fitzgerald and Muske (2002) suggest further *"multivariate analysis"* (p.14) to be carried out and in-depth study into the role of the women in copreneurial ventures. This would:

> *"[...] address the degree to which their contribution to both the family and the business are acknowledged or discounted."* (Fitzgerald and Muske, 2002: 15)

The article draws on National Family Surveys from (1997 & 2000) looking at copreneurs and their ability to maintain a viable business over time. The research highlights that women in business literature continue to be invisible even though they are the fastest growing business category. Of the couples that participated in the

survey, those more likely to continue with their businesses over time were older and well educated. Those businesses that discontinued represented the participants with "*lower levels of education and resources, both financially and in terms of number of people employed*" (p.193). Other couples who discontinued were younger and with the highest number of young children at home. The study also showed that couples were making an active lifestyle choice by choosing to value quality of life over profit. These couples reached a level of revenue from the business that maintained a standard of living that offered them more choice and control of their lives.

2.4 Theoretical perspectives from the family business literature

In the following section three theoretical frameworks are examined which shed light on the copreneurial context.

2.4.1 Family embeddedness

Aldrich and Cliff (2003) highlight the importance of acknowledging the part that the family has to play in entrepreneurial venture. Historically they have been viewed as two separate areas of study, they suggest that the two are "*inextricably linked* (p.575), and that *"the adjective family"* is something that scholars are *"compelled" to adopt even though "90-98% of all businesses owned by households are family businesses"* (Heck & Trent, 1999 in Aldrich & Cliff 2003: 575). There are currently no figures on the number of copreneurs in the UK.

Family business places the family at the centre of the business and Aldrich and Cliff (2003) suggest that looking at new venture creation through a family embeddedness lens will broaden our understanding of family business and the decisions they need to make during their working lives (p.573). Chapter 8 will explore the limitations of this

approach. Denise Fletcher (2010: 453) indicates that the benefits to exploring and developing this perspective far outweigh the difficulties. This is particularly clear when exploring *"family transitions, death, marriage, childbirth [...] resources financial, human, labour, information, and values [...] attitudes to work in shaping new venture creation"* (Fletcher, 2010: 453). This perspective is explored in the family embeddedness model developed by Aldrich and Cliff (2003) seen here in (Fig. 3).

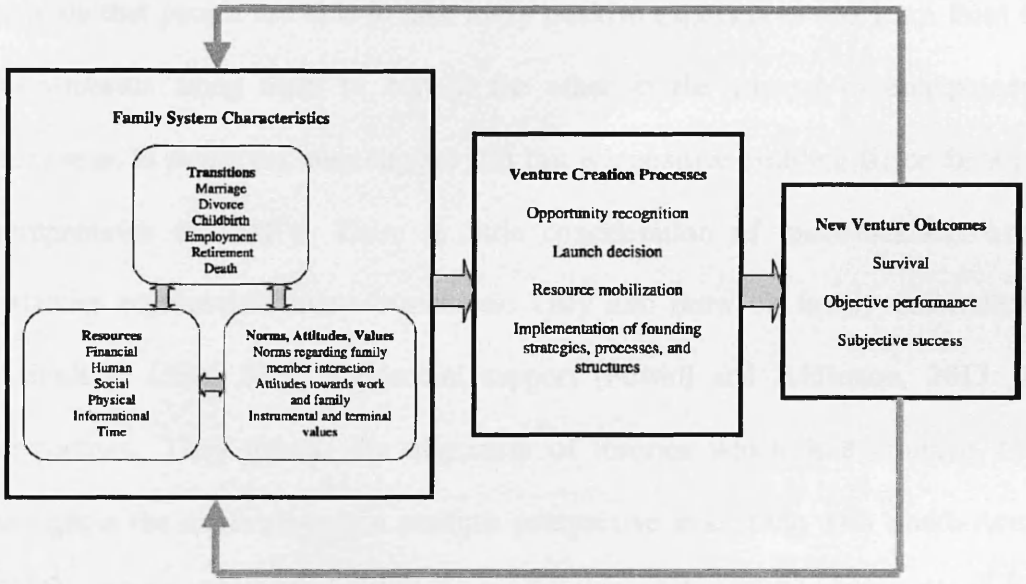


Figure 3: Family embeddedness perspectives on new venture creation (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003)

The model presents their conceptual framework for the family embeddedness perspective. The left hand side presents family system processes drawing on a psychological perspective that might influence new venture creation such as life transitions or changes in *"resources, norms, attitudes or values"*. The right hand side highlights those processes that influence the start-up decision and ultimately how those decisions and the family system affect is the survival and perceived success of the business. This thesis will place a particular emphasis on gaining an in-depth understanding of the left hand side of the model. It will contribute this knowledge by

highlighting the importance of considering the intimate spousal relationship in a copreneurial business micro-business, drawing on the rich empirical data to help to understand the nuances of this smallest measure of a family business. This researcher will draw attention to the importance, highlighted through the analysis, of life transitions and gender role for such family businesses particularly when bringing up young children in particular.

Powell and Eddleston (2013) discuss work-family and family–work enrichment. This suggests that people are able to take away positive experiences and learn from their environments using them to benefit the other in the context of entrepreneurial endeavour. In particular, they suggest that this is a positive enabling factor for women entrepreneurs in SME's. There is little consideration of micro-business and in particular copreneurial micro-businesses. They also draw on family embeddedness (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003) and social support (Powell and Eddleston, 2013: 262) perspectives. They discuss the alignment of theories which is a common theme throughout the exploration of a multiple perspective in keeping with Smith-Acuña's (2011) systems approach enabling an exploration of the family system discussed in Aldrich and Cliff's study (2003).

2.4.2 Copreneurial couple identity

Danes and Jang (2013) in their study into copreneurial identity highlight the *"fundamental attribution error"* of not examining the couple context of a copreneurial business. They suggest that:

> *"Entrepreneurial literature is filled with how entrepreneurs form their identity (Dimov, 2007). We know little, however about how entrepreneurs and their*

> *spouses mutually form a collective, copreneurial identity".* (Danes & Jang, 2013: 46)

They draw on identity theory examining the importance of spousal communication and the formation of a *"collective cognition resulting in mutual commitment"* (p.46). They suggest that that support and commitment provided by a spouse can affect the success of business goals and is something that changes over time. They suggest that:

> *"The couple relationship strength provides a stock of resilience capacity composed of spousal resources from which the entrepreneur can draw to combat stresses created by the newness in venture creation".*(p.47).

Identity theory enabled Danes and Jang (2013) to indicate how important it is for couples to maintain a *"venture related communication"* (p.57) particularly in the early phase of the venture when spousal support and commitment to the entrepreneurial goals is important.

As with the majority of other studies into copreneurs, they do however consider their research in the context of a single entrepreneurial leader and do not include the copreneurial businesses that consist of spouses who share the entrepreneurial idea and leadership of the business equally.

2.4.3 A Gender perspective

McAdam and Marlow (2013) examine the single case of a copreneurial couple where the woman is the entrepreneurial lead and suggest that such couples face an *"ideological dilemma"* based on the normative gender order of a spousal relationship (p.152). Using a narrative approach (Czarniawska, 2004; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Hamilton, 2013b; Lazlo, 2008; Riessman, 2008; Rhodes & Brown, 2005), they examine the in-depth interviews of the spouses to determine how the couple describe their daily copreneurial lives. This is viewed in the context of the prevailing discourse

on entrepreneurship which is *"consistently described in exactly the same words as those used to describe manhood"* (Ahl, 2007: 687). McAdam and Marlow (2013) found that whilst the wife in their study developed the business idea and performed the visible role as the entrepreneurial lead in the business, the reality based on their analysis indicated that:

> *"In almost every element of the business process, there is evidence that entrepreneurship is a male driven activity within which women are interlopers"* (p.159).

They highlight the importance of examining copreneurship through a gender lens developed in Chapters 3 and 6 of this thesis.

2.5 Concluding comments

This chapter has highlighted the relatively early stages that research into the copreneurial phenomena is at in the academic community. This chapter drew on both family business and entrepreneurship literature in acknowledgement of the cross over between the two areas of literature in the debate over the family business and copreneurial phenomena. The literature review has highlighted the importance of developing a more nuanced understanding of the processes of copreneurial business with few studies examining the relational perspective.

An overview of the historical context of copreneurial business demonstrates that the spousal business perspective dates back to pre-industrial days (Davidoff & Hall, 1992; Gamber, 1998; Pahl, 1984; Walby 1990; 1997) when the economic household consisted of a kinship network held together through the combined labour of the household. The demarcation of roles was a later addition influenced by the industrial revolution where public (masculine) and private (feminine) spheres developed

(Fletcher, 2001). This social construction of paid labour highlights the continued discourse on gender role within the domain of paid work and pervades the debate on entrepreneurship (Lewis, 2006). The literature has highlighted the continued masculine discourse on entrepreneurship and the role that women play within a family business (Baines & Wheelock, 1998; Hamilton, 2006, 2013 a, b; McAdam & Marlow, 2013; Rowe & Hong, 2000). This points to a need to develop further study on copreneurial business that is the potential germination stage of a family business.

This chapter explored a number of potential perspectives for this study and highlighted the preference for a multiple perspective to enable this researcher to examine the complex layers of the couple relationship that constitute the bigger copreneurial picture. Whilst studies have examined the embeddedness of the family systems within a family business (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003) there have been no specific studies carried out on the copreneurial perspective.

The following chapter will draw on the insight of literature outside of the family business and entrepreneurship discipline to develop the multiple perspective approach discussed in Chapter 1.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Gender , power and relational practice

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Historical context of work and home

3.3 Gender and feminist perspectives

3.4 Gender and power

3.5 The ideology of equality at work and home in a spousal relationship

3.6 Concluding comments

Chapter 3 – Gender, power and relational practice

3.1 Introduction

Research exploring the gender roles and ideologies of male and female copreneurs is limited in family business and entrepreneurship literature (Ahl, 2003; 2006; Marlow, Henry & Carter, 2009; McAdam & Marlow, 2013; Mirchandani, 1999). The family business literature continues to focus on women's invisibility (Cole, 1997; Danes & Olson, 2003; Hamilton, 2006; Marshack, 1993; Marshack, 1994; Muske & Fitzgerald, 2005, Millman & Martin, 2007), family conflict (Danes & Olson, 2003; Powell & Eddleston, 2013) or business success (Muske & Fitzgerald, 2006). The entrepreneurship literature continues to render the non-masculine perspective invisible, that is to say it measures entrepreneurship as an, individualistic, autonomous pursuit embedded firmly in a masculine domain. (Marlow *et al.,* 2009: 139) suggest that:

> *"Within the prevailing discourse 'to think entrepreneur' was to 'think male' as the normative assumptions underpinning entrepreneurial activity reflected masculine priorities and characteristics".*

This chapter will aim to provide an overview of the main debates around gender role and identity drawing on literature outside of the family business and entrepreneurship to provide a more rounded approach to examining gender and copreneurship. This thesis uses copreneurship as the key link between the entrepreneurship and family business literatures (Blenkinsopp & Owens, 2010) to highlight a different approach to performing entrepreneurship.

Section 3.2 will explore the historical background to the social construction of the family and what implications this has for examining the formation of a copreneurial

business. It will question the demarcation between the public and private face of work and explore the literature that debates the role that spouses play in the working and home environments.

Section 3.3 will examine the different feminist perspectives relating to gender ideologies and relational approaches (Dutton & Dukerich, 2006) to family and work considered during the early stages of this study. It will look at the debate on gender and powered and how a feminist perspective can offer an alternative way of considering the discourse on power and section 3.5 will consider the ideological complexities of working with an intimate other.

3.2 Historical context of work and home

Historically the family has played a changing role in the domains of paid and domestic labour (Crossick & Haupt, 1984, Davidoff & Hall, 1987; Gamber, 1998; Honeyman, 2000; Pahl, 1984). Prior to the industrial revolution families in England were often reliant on each other to maintain a livelihood. The notion of *"family"* and *"household"* were interchangeable and not based on biological connection according to Tilly and Scott (1987: 13). A household expanded according to economic and social need often housing blood and non-kin. This enabled households to balance *"labor and consumption"* particularly for rural families (Tilly & Scott 1987: 13).

Demarcation of gender roles between paid and unpaid labour served to underpin capitalist notions of real work during the move away from "*Primary production"* to *"manufacturing"* (Tilly, 1987: 63). This birth of "*industrial capitalism"* (Oakley, 2005: 109) led to a change in the value that was placed on the work that women did in the new industrial domain and home. Kerber (1988: 28) in her observations on American women highlights how the workplace became *"gender-segregated"*. She

suggests that, "working class women were expected to provide there labour for a nominal fee and *"[...] were regarded as not really at work"* (p.28). This is in parallel with the English experience where women and children expected to provide labour for the factories without the recognition or status of the men. Kerber (1988:10) suggests that: *"Women are said to live in a distinct "world" engaged in nurturant activities, focused on children, husbands, and family dependents"*. The new social construction of work and home determined that women maintain the home environment to ensure that the men were available to provide labour for their new employers (Freedman, 2002: 46). This stands in contrast to the pre-industrial family described by Tilly & Scott (1987: 12).

> *"The labor needs of the household defined the work roles of men, women and children. Their work, in turn, fed the family. The interdependence of work and residence, of household labor needs, subsistence requirements, and family relationships constituted the 'family economy".*

Industrialisation eroded the social/community network that enabled families to support each other in their day-to-day domestic and working lives. That is not to say that the picture prior to 1760 was idyllic for working families in Britain. Smart (2007:16) warns us not to look back on the past as a *"Golden Age of the family"* which she suggests is *"a cultural myth"* and something that we hold on to in an attempt to add value to the argument that modern family life is less than it should be measured against this ideal. Smart (2007:16) suggests that:

> *"This should alert us to the extent to which, in dealing with families, we are dealing with aspirations, yearnings, falsehoods and nostalgia, and this is dangerous territory".*

This thesis will explore to what extent the participants articulate an idealised vision for their future spousal and family lives, embedded in such aspirations and nostalgia.

3.2.1 The public and private spheres

> *"The most serious deficiency of a model based upon two apposed spheres appears, in short, in its alliance with the dualisms of the past dichotomies which teach that women must be understood not in terms of relationship with other women and with men- but of difference and apartness".*
>
> Rosaldo (1980: 409)

Ideological perspectives on entrepreneurship and family business continue to exist within a gendered construct. Here Gamber (1998: 190) suggests that the term *"entrepreneur (and not least the businessman) have profoundly masculine connotations.* The discourse on the separate spaces inhabited by men and women continue to pervade interpretation of the social construction of entrepreneurship and family business. Such traditional hegemonic perspectives support the view that women inhabit the private supportive space. Toqueville in Kerber (1988: 10) suggests that for women *"the inexorable opinion of the public carefully circumscribes [her] within the circle of domestic interests and duties and forbids her to step beyond it".*

In the context of family business, contemporary literature for the most part continues to position the woman firmly in the private sphere where she supports the public, entrepreneurial endeavours of her male spouse

This perspective highlights the oversimplification of interpretations of the family construct and family business. On closer examination, many families continued to weave a life that was not so easily categorized or defined. Kerber (1988: 32) observers that;

> *"Central kitchens, cooked food delivery, professionalized home cleaning and other efforts to reconstruct women's work within the domestic sphere severely challenged the traditional social order".*

It could be argued that this reflects the experience of the copreneurial dynamic where the couples are often choosing to combine the public and the private spaces to create a third sphere where the two become inextricably linked.

Rosenberg (1982: 246) highlights the continued tendency towards a narrative of separate spheres which remains current in the twenty first century. This illustrates the dilemma faced by the copreneurs who are striving to rewrite their socially embedded characters. Rosenberg (1982) suggests that we can only move *"beyond separate spheres"* when the men are willing to fully participate in the *"social vision"* (p. 246). Interpretation of the narratives in this study illustrates how many of the couples are attempting to address this dilemma with varying degrees of success. This will be explored further in Chapter 8 of this thesis.

3.2.2 Gender, marriage, family and work

> *"The elimination of the present organization of parenting in favour of a system of parenting in which both men and women are responsible would be a tremendous social advance. This outcome is historically possible, but far from inevitable. Such advances do not occur simply because they are better for "society," and certainly not because they are better for some (usually less powerful) people. They depend on the organization and activity of all women and men to recognize that their interests lie in transforming the social organization of gender and eliminating sexual inequality".*
>
> Chodorow (1979: 219).

This next section explores both the psychological and sociological literature to examine the issue of who does what at work and home. This continues to be a contentious area of debate and many of the issues raised by Chodorow (1979; 1989; 2005) and Parsons (2000) continue to be central to the debate on gender role within the spousal dynamic. This thesis contributes to this debate by examining the spousal relationships of copreneurs who present the extreme perspective on how a couple might balance those *"spaces of work and non-work"* (Felstead, Jewson, Phizacklea & Walters, 2002: 56) when the business is often based in the home environment. The socially constructed world of work and home continues to be divisionally separate and gendered despite efforts to *"eradicate discrimination between the sexes in the search for social equality and justice"* (Gilligan, 1982: 6). Women in a heterosexual relationship continue to perform two-thirds of the domestic labour in the family home according to the European Social Survey (ESS, 2012: 9).

Miller's (1977) psychological study suggested that the socially acceptable face of work and home in the West privileges a dominant masculine discourse, and this is an argument that continues to play a central role in current discourse. The argument presented on gender role and identity in Miller's book "*Toward a new psychology of women*" (1977) and (Jordan *et al.*, 1991; Jordan *et al.*, ed. 2004) suggests that women perform their working and home lives very differently to men (Sullivan, 2004), taking an essentialist stance on the gender divide. Miller (1977) suggests that women have a fundamental need to be in relation with others and concurs with Chodorow (2005) that this is developed in childhood and in contrast to the way in which men perform both at work and at home.

Chodorow (2005: 217) in her study carried out psychoanalysis on the mother-infant relationship to explore the sociology of gender she states that:

"I show how parenting qualities are created in women through specific social and psychological processes. By implication, I show how these qualities could be created in men, if men and women parented equally".

She found that children of pre-school age are subject to socially constructed gender stereotyping formed by the age of five but open to change through "*life experience or [...] the analytic process itself* (p.216). Boys are encouraged to develop the ability to separate themselves from the mother figure becoming autonomous, whilst girls learn how to remain close, developing a heightened aptitude for seeing themselves in relation with others. The power is firmly placed in the hands of the boys with the girls developing a subordinate position proliferated throughout their development through education, social media and the prevalent discourse in their sociocultural environment. Chodorow (2005) acknowledged that in many cases men were striving to participate more in the domestic side of their family lives suggested that men "*Babysit their own children"* (1978: 179). This is supported in part by the work of Gatrell (2005: 131) who found that the men in her study were far more involved in the *"physical and emotional aspects of childcare"* although she found that a number of men in her study did more than just support their wives but took the *"lead responsibility for child care"* (p.134). She also found that for the majority of the men participating that this did not permeate into any other areas of domesticity where the women continued to provide the main body of the labour (Gershuny & Sullivan, 2003; Sullivan, 2001; 2004), supporting Chodorow's (2005) perspective. Maushart (2002) suggests that women continue to take the lead responsibility for childcare and they write the lists that enable their husbands to play their part in the household tasks (p.130).

3.3 Gender and feminist perspectives

Bird and Brush (2002: 43) suggest that the discussion on business start-up practices cannot be complete without the inclusion of a feminist perspective. They state that:

> "[…] *the omission of the "feminine" aspects in theoretical discussions of new ventures and new venture creation processes raises the risk that our studies may suffer a lack of construct validity".*

They discuss feminine and masculine approaches to work whereby gender ideologies can determine how men and women socially construct their paid and non-paid activities. Miller's perspective (1977) suggests that relational behaviour embedded in a feminine approach to work and home and enacted from an early age.

Fletcher (1998; 2001) supports this perspective in her research into women engineers finding that the women adopted a relational approach of nurturing and supporting others in their daily working routines. She also found that this behaviour was, rendered invisible in the organisation suggesting that such behaviour was simply part of being a woman. However, in her later research she pointed to the danger of feminizing the relational approach, suggesting that from a female perspective it can be *"confused with their social roles in society as nurturing wives and mothers"* (Fletcher, 2012: 97).

Bruni *et al.,* (2004, 2005) discuss the question of gender and entrepreneurship and what impact it has on men and women who choose to own or take over a business. They draw attention to the traditional, patriarchal perspective of entrepreneurship and suggest that discourse has propagated a gender-neutral position on entrepreneurial behaviour. They suggest that historically emphasis is on *"economic rationality*

alleged to be universal and agendered" and argue that the current emphasis is on the gender role of men and women performing entrepreneurship within a patriarchal construct (p.406). This perspective is considered in Hamilton (2013a) suggesting that rather than making the point that entrepreneurship is gendered and therefore carried out differently depending on the gender of the participant, we should be looking at the act of *"entrepreneuring"* (Hamilton, 2013a).

Currently discourse on entrepreneurship positioned within a predominantly masculine construction of entrepreneurship is clouding our view of the actual process of running a business venture regardless of the gender of the person doing it. Bruni *et al.,* (2004) carried out an ethnographic study on a number of businesses in Italy to explore the part that gender plays within entrepreneurial practices. They suggested that *"gender and entrepreneurship are enacted as situated practices"*, and that gender identity is something that is changeable depending on the situation that the person is dealing with (p. 406).

One of the primary considerations for Bruni *et al.,* (2005) was that, currently entrepreneurship continues to be considered a predominantly a masculine pursuit. They suggest that entrepreneurship is seen as *cultural as well as economic"* phenomenon (p.5) and suggest that it is culturally constructed within its social environment leading to a heroic view of the process (Bruni *et al.,* 2004: 407). This consequently renders the female perspective *"invisible"* and leads to the *"othering of the non-male"* approaches to entrepreneurship (p.407). They suggest that gendered practices are learned and applied when needed and they draw our attention to the feminist perspective of performativity (p.4). They talk of the different symbolic domains of the male and female where the male is the:

> *"Mercurial personality: shrewd, pragmatic, creative open minded and adventurous" and the woman is seen as "Passive, adaption, and flexible"* (p.407).

The question is what do we privilege as entrepreneurial identity and behaviour? Bruni *et al.,* (2004) discuss the question of spheres and ask us to examine the public and private dichotomy that reinforces our perspective on entrepreneurial identity. They suggest that:

> *"[...] the concept of entrepreneurship itself comprises of a gender subtext which renders maleness invisible and thus sustains the acritical reproduction of hegemonic masculinity"* (p.410).

This perspective continues to underpin the discourse on entrepreneurship both academically and in the popular press highlighted by Hamilton (2013a) and serves to render invisible the importance of considering a feminine approach to entrepreneurship (Bird & Brush 2002). Bruni *et al.,* (2004) explore the *"gender subtext"* of entrepreneurship that *"renders maleness invisible and thus sustains the critical reproduction of hegemonic masculinity"* (p.410). This supports the work of Fletcher and Jacques (1999) who discuss the practices that are disappeared within the discussion on entrepreneurship. By not looking at the experiences of male entrepreneurs when examining the female experience, we are rendering the masculine perspective invisible and discounting the very patriarchal perspectives we are using to interpret the women's entrepreneurial journey. They suggest that to study men and women in entrepreneurship we must accept that "*Doing gender and doing business* [are] *tied together*" and that entrepreneurship is a "*social practice"* (p. 424).

This is particularly pertinent when considering the copreneurial dynamic where gender identity and the ideologies that form the basis of the spousal motivation for copreneurship are central to understanding this form of entrepreneurship. This new perspective will require that both the masculine and feminine approaches to entrepreneurship. This will form the basis for a new discourse creating a more balanced understanding of what it is to perform a role as an entrepreneur with an intimate other. This will underpin the approach of this thesis and its aim to explore a more detailed understanding of the copreneurial experience.

3.3.1 Post-structural feminism

In the early stages of the study a poststructuralist lens enabled this researcher to explore the nature of how knowledge is socially constructed in a gender neutral way. Examining how *"knowledge, power and discourse"* interrelate to produce our understanding of this knowledge and how some voices can be marginalized (Fletcher, 2001: 21). Feminist post-structuralism concentrates on the gendered nature of knowledge production, which in terms of entrepreneurship, continues to privilege a dominant, patriarchal voice for knowledge production in academic discourse on entrepreneurship and family business (Gupta, Turban, Wasti & Sikdar, 2009).

Fletcher (2001) suggests that post-structural critique offers an ideal perspective to examine the part that women play in organizational activities, highlighting a number of key areas for consideration. Firstly a *"relationship between power and knowledge"*, secondly, how language and other human activity can help to construct experience, and finally what part resistance plays in this understanding (p.21).

This perspective is well suited to examining the copreneurial dynamic whereby the couple are required to perform a complex dance around their understanding of the

socially acceptable face of work, and what role each partner plays within their entrepreneurial and intimate identities.

3.3.2 Feminist sociology of work

A feminist sociology of work examines the current discourse on what constitutes paid work derived from a framework developed in the industrial revolution discussed earlier in this chapter (Freedman, 2002; Oakley; 1985; 2005). It is suggested by Fletcher (2001) that, the current socially constructed face of paid work embedded in *"Weberian bureaucratic principles"* that considers how labour or work has monetary value, and is broken down into a series of processes of measureable tasks and activities (p.25). This underpins the social and cultural discourse on the division of labour that continues to devalue the domestic domain that appears to produce no discernible monetary value (Coltrane, 1989; Kerber, 1988; Sullivan, 2000; 2004). This perspective disregards the fact that such domestic labour enables men and siblings to leave the domestic environment to fulfil their public work commitments. There is no value placed on the enabling factors provided by the woman to empower the workers to leave home and perform their job each day.

3.3.3 Relational practice theory

Miller (1977) developed a relational perspective in the 1970's and suggested that, human growth, whether we are referring to personal, or organisational is achieved through a need for connection to others, particularly in women. She referred to this as *"growth-in-connection"* and developed relational practice theory to offer an alternative feminist perspective to the more prevalent malestream theories *"which had been developed listening only to men's experiences"* (Fletcher, 2001:9). Miller (1977) suggested that traits attributed to women, such as empathy, vulnerability and nurturing

considered weaknesses in the workplace are beneficial to the wellbeing of an organisation (Buttner, 2001; Fletcher & Jacques, 1999). She stated that women are used in the workplace to fill the relational gap that men were unable to fulfil due to the social construction of masculinity and femininity (Chodorow, 2005), discussed earlier in this chapter.

Butler (1990) suggests that socially constructed concepts of what it is to be male or female are *"deeply embedded and difficult to break"* (p.22), and that we perform gender according to the construction of the world around us. Current family and entrepreneurial literature re-enforces the perspective that perceives entrepreneurship as a process performed by men and supported by women (McAdam & Marlow, 2013).

Hartling (2008: 327) discusses Millers' work (1977) referring to *"growth-fostering behaviour"* as the *"five good things"* which are *"zest, empowered action, increased knowledge, increased self-worth, and a desire for more connection"*. (Fletcher and Jacques, 1999) suggest that Millers' work contributes to an organizational theory of relational practice in two ways:

1. *"Growth as opposed to affect as the motivation to engage in relational interactions.*
2. *Moves the discussion away from undifferentiated ideal that "relationships are good for business" toward a discussion of the characteristics of growth fostering relational interactions as differentiated from non-growth fostering interactions and relationships" (p.5.)*

They believe that *"a new language of competency grounded in an epistemology of relational experience"* is needed (p.6). This enables the broader debate on relational practice theory to examine the *"competencies of relational skills"* such as:

> *"...empathy, an ability to acknowledge vulnerability, an ability to express and experience emotion, an ability to participate in the development of another, and an expectation that relational interactions will be sites of growth for both parties".*
>
> (Fletcher, J. 2001: 31).

Jordan *et al.,* (1991) point to the frustration of women over the *'burden of their empathetic attunement'* (p.284) They wish to adopt a more masculine approach of autonomy, enabling them to be *'able to switch off emotions in the service of logic'* (p. 284).

Fletcher and Jacques (1999: 4) emphasise that:

> *"It is important to note the reification of the masculine and the absence of the feminine have little to do with the characteristics or intentions of individual men or women. Reification is a social process that idealizes certain practices and "disappears" the experiences of both women and men that do not fit this ideal".*

They go on to discuss the work of Jones (1975) who states that language *'is not a mere collection of labels but a powerful force shaping and reflecting our reality*, and Alvesson & Deetz, (1996) believe that:

> *"[...] developing a language of competency to describe relational skills is a powerful act, involving a critical epistemology of experience and explicit theory of knowledge".*

Fletcher (2012) however suggests that the mothering aspect to relational behaviour is problematic when examining the construction of a business. Her research does not seem to take into consideration the extra dimension of copreneurial venture where intimacy and family processes are at the heart of the spousal dynamic. Binns (2008: 600) suggests that we consider a relational approach to leadership which is in contrast to the traditional heroic perspective.

3.4 Gender and Power

Foucault in the (Faubion, 1994) translation of his works discusses power in its primitive form as something based on violence, seen as power over another, but also describes a different more relational power relationship where we act and react to an other's performance.

> *"[...] power is not a violence that sometimes hides, or an implicitly renewed consent. It operates on the field of possibilities in which the behaviour of active subjects is able to inscribe itself. It is a set of actions that on possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces it makes easier or more difficult; it releases or contrives, makes more probable or less; in the extreme, it constrains or forbids absolutely, but it is always a way of acting upon one or more acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action. A set of actions upon other actions"* Foucault (in Faubion. ed., 1994: 341).

Miller (1977) believed that to achieve a greater parity for women a new way of examining issues of power needed to be developed. She suggests that power is something that we share with others rather than something held over another. She suggests that women have a different approach to conceptualising power claiming that:

> *"Women need power to advance their own development, but they do not "need" the power to limit the development of others"* (p.117).

She goes on to explain that women come from a position of subordination to the dominant system, and have traditionally performed in a world where they do not need *"subordinates"* and do not believe *"that their power is necessary for the maintenance of self-image"* (p.118). Miller (1977) explains that women approach power using their relational capabilities, and suggests that they can present power as a devise to enhance experience and interaction with others rather than something used *"as a poor substitute for other things –like cooperation"* (p.118). This thesis will highlight the ways in which women are achieving *"self-determination"* (p.118) through their joint endeavour to rewrite their working and personal lives with their intimate partner. It will highlight how this relational behaviour is not exclusive to the female spouses, and demonstrate that power over another is not necessarily the sole domain of the man attributed to the formation of the entrepreneurial identity.

Women see power as something that relates to how they are able to connect to others, build relationships and add to the '*wellbeing*' of others (Gilligan, 1982; Buttner, 2001: 256). This perspective is currently lacking in the discourse on copreneurial business in the extant literature and will form a major contribution in this thesis.

3.4.1 The visibility of women in family business in the academic literature

Family business literature continues to neglect the role of the woman within the family dynamic (Barrett & Moores, 2009). This can be addressed Hamilton (2006) suggests by putting *"the family at the heart of the research"* and in particular the woman. Family business literature continues to focus on the owner manager who is usually male, and disregard the complexities of the spousal dynamic in copreneurial business (Muske & Fitzgerald, 2006). Fournier and Lightfoot (1996) suggest that

family business *"blurs the separation between market and home"* (p.254), and Mulholland (1996) suggests that, *"patriarchal strategies shape the role of women"*. Marshack (1994: 62) found that copreneurs negotiate the complexities of work and home through stereotypical sex-role orientation.

Poza and Messer (2001) in their qualitative study from the Family Business programme in the USA carried out 11 in depth interviews in which they identified a *"spousal role type"*. The definition was determined according to how the CEO spouse, in this instance the wife, related to the owner manager husband. The breakdown found that they were either:

> "*...a jealous spouse, the chief trust officer, the Business partner or Copreneurs, the Vice President of Human Resources, Finance and Facilities, the Senior Advisor and Values Keeper, and the Free Agent"* (p.29).

Participation in the business was part of their inextricably linked relationship between work and home (Danes & Olson, 2003; Danes & Morgan, 2004; Hamilton, 2006, 2013b). They suggested that this was a normal part of their relationship with their partner rather than an exception. The women played an important relational role and were able to *'"preserve and strengthen family unity and the feasibility of the family business continuity"* (p.34). Poza and Messer (2001) call for further research to be carried out appreciating the limitations of their small study and a tendency towards generalization.

Rowe and Hong (2000; 2) found that, whilst women were playing an increasingly significant part in business start-up and long-term viability of a business, very little *"demographic information, statistical data or systematic research"* was carried out .Women are entering family firms to benefit from the advantages that family business

can offer including: the opportunity to access flexible working, breaking the glass ceiling in traditionally male industries, and enabling women to gain opportunities for personal growth (Barnett & Barnett, 1988; Vadnjal & Zupan, 2009).

Rowe and Hong (2000) draw our attention to cultural traditions and the stereotypical sex-role that women play. This view of women in the business literature has propagated the view that women play a secondary, invisible role in family business (Hamilton, 2006; Marshack, 1993) performing the role of supportive *"business wife"* (Baines & Wheelock, 2000; McAdam & Marlow, 2013; Mulholland, 1996). Rowe and Hong (2000: 10) found that the company size, health of the husband, kind of business and whether the wife was working elsewhere all played a part in her involvement in the family business. Women employed in the family business earned the lowest salaries again indicating that they are often undervalued. Domestic duties were not taken into consideration in the study, which reflects the current tendency of business literature to discount the domestic and caregiving domains. However, Rowe and Hong, (2000) argued that women not directly employed by the business still made a significant contribution to the business by reducing financial outgoings from the household budget. The article found that women are undervalued regardless of their rising levels of education and vocation, and they consider whether *"women who earn MBAs really want to join their husbands to become the company bookkeeper?"* (p.11)

3.4.2 Exploring family systems theory

Cramton (1993) explored the public and the private face of entrepreneurship within a family firm using Family Systems Theory (FST) as her theoretical framework. This article places a critical lens over traditional and often hegemonic entrepreneurial literature, where the *"symbolic universe of the male"* takes centre stage (Bruni *et al.*,

2005). Cramton describes an American family who have owned a clothing retail store since the nineteen fifties and are now into second-generation leadership. Cramton (1993) leads us through the business start-up using both primary and secondary information to construct her understanding of the family narrative with regard to the birth of the business. Cramton illustrates the marked difference between the public story which presents the husband Art as a typical *"heroic male"* (Hamilton, 2009: 254), and the private story which paints a more relational picture where Edith, Art's wife, plays a key role in the formation and financing of the business.

The article discusses the traditional, patriarchal typologies of entrepreneurship, which identify entrepreneurs as opportunistic individuals who are often *"craftsmen who are orientated towards growth"* (p.234). When viewing entrepreneurship through the different perspective of Family Systems Theory (FST), Cramton suggests that we can see a very different story. The family run business is not about an individual who has chiselled out his place in the business world, but a group of interlinked people who have responded to changes in their relationships. We are shown a family in transition, dealing with children who have grown up and are preparing to leave home and the affect that this has on the parents who must deal with this *"emotional shockwave"* (Cramton, 1993: 237).

Cramton (1993) explores issues of intimacy and renegotiation of role illustrating how FST can explain how the natural processes of being part of a family unit can affect how a business is constructed and maintained and which does not fit with the socially constructed discourse on entrepreneurship in the mainstream literature (Danes, 2011; Fitzgerald & Muske, 2002; Marshack, 1994). Art and Edith work together during the business start-up with Edith playing a pivotal role in making their dream into a reality.

This contradicts the public hegemonic version of the story positioning Edith in the background performing the role of a supportive wife (p.251).

Cramton missed an opportunity to explore this issue further during her research. The private story indicated that Edith had played a key role in the business right from the start, providing both the finance and the idea and yet further questions with regard to Edith's public invisibility were not pursued thus further re-enforcing her *"obscured"* (p.247) position within the narrative. The article warns of the tendency for the researcher to apply their own interpretation of the story which perhaps explains how particular emphasis has been placed on the mainstream version of the family business story. This article sheds light on family business and entrepreneurship through a different theoretical framework. Exploring issues of family construction and the *"inextricable link"* (Hamilton, 2006; Marshack, 1993) between work and home when owning and running a business together.

Marshack (1993) found in her study that this lead in many cases to the invisibility of the woman within the business. Many of the women were playing an equal or leadership role. Whilst popular books have been written on the subject of copreneurs (Barnett & Barnett, 1988; Danco, 1981; Jones & Jones 2001; Krupa & Kirk-Kuwaye; Nelton 1986) little empirical research has been carried out and this continues to be the case.

Marshack (1993) draws our attention to the continued discourse on entrepreneurship, which paints a picture of the heroic male at the helm, and the woman playing a minor role (p.356). Salganicoff (1990) suggests that:

> *"[...] if literature about family business is in its infancy, then literature on women in family business is still gestating".*

The concept of women as *"invisible"* is primarily due to the continued acceptance of 'stereotypical gender differences' (Marshack, 1993:356). Whilst she acknowledges that the evidence suggests that women who work in family business are "wives, mothers and daughters first, and employees, managers, and executives second, she suggests that research into this dynamic could enable us to *"look beyond the gender stereotypes"*. Future research needs to explore the connection between *"love and work"* (Fletcher, 2010) and how couples manage the boundaries between the two.

Rapoport and Rapoport (1993) explore the female approach to family business which they suggest adhere more closely to 'family values'. Women are far more likely to *"shoulder more of the domestic responsibilities"* and put their own careers on hold to reduce sex role conflicts (Gatrell, 2005; 2008). Danes & Olson (2003) also discusses the hidden role that women play and concur with (Danes & Olson, 2003; Hamilton, 2006; Marshack, 1994; Poza & Messer, 2001) that often women are, hidden, and that further empirical research is needed. They highlight that, power and conflict tension are identified as major components of the co-entrepreneurial dynamic, and they found that a certain level of *"constructive tension"* was needed *"to stimulate change to remain a viable business"* (p.66).

Such tension could however, tip over into an excess of tension that could then lead to the ultimate failure of the enterprise. (Danes & Olson, 2003: 66). The report showed that women demonstrated a far greater level of dissatisfaction and left feeling *"invisible"* (Hamilton, 2006; Marshack, 1994). The previous work of, McClendon & Kadis, (1991); Stafford, Duncan, Danes, & Winter, (1999) are discussed in the paper, drawing our attention to what they consider the five areas of conflict for family business: *"justice conflict, role conflict, work/family conflict, identity conflict, and succession conflict"* (Danes & Morgan, 2004: 250). The paper recommends that

consultants and family therapy practitioners would benefit from a greater understanding of EFT and family dynamics, and emphasise the damage done when practitioners do not have a firm understanding of the complexities of family business.

3.5 The ideology of equality at work and home in a spousal relationship

Couples who choose to enter into a business relationship together face the multi-layered complexity of managing their ideological, spousal relationship alongside their new relationship as business partners. McAdam and Marlow (2013) refer to the "*ideological dilemma"* that often faces such couples as they attempt to perform business and domestic labour within their socially constructed relational world. They examine this through a gender lens looking at the complexities of managing a copreneurial business when the woman takes on the role of entrepreneurial lead. They describe how this stands in contrast to the hegemonic discourse on entrepreneurship that perpetuates current research which, offers an *"embedded masculinized bias"* (Bird & Brush, 2002; Bruni *et al.,* 2004; 2005; Gupta *et al.,* 2009; Hamilton, 2013, McAdam & Marlow, 2013; Ogbor, 2000). They suggest that the notion of gender is something performed by women who endeavour to fit into the masculinized norm where men simply go about their normal business.

Their case study of a copreneurial au pair business explores the complexities of a couple running a business embedded in care and connection to others. They suggest that this highlights the ideological dilemma facing the business for Rosie in an industry traditionally associated with feminine traits such as empathy and caring (p.156). Whilst they explain that Rosie demonstrated all the attributes associated with entrepreneurship such as *"opportunity recognition"* (McAdam & Marlow, 2013; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000) they highlight how the businesses reinforces the

gender ideologies associated with the care industry. This demonstrates the stereotypical assumptions associated with an industry determining that Rosie will play the visible role of a *"caring female"* figurehead for the company. It also highlights the ideological dilemma for Rosie's husband who has chosen to enter into an industry that is generally associated with *"women's work"* (p.156).

The study found that whilst Rosie is able to demonstrate the attributes associated with entrepreneurial new venture creation such as risk taking propensity and opportunity recognition the couple still conformed to stereotypical gender roles associated with childcare. It describes how Rosie's husband, whilst inhabiting the traditional feminine position *"behind the scenes"* (p.159) in the business also continues to perform within an ideological patriarchal framework. He is *"selectively visible"* (p.159) in the business, performing the role of financial negotiator and head of strategy and McAdam and Marlow (2013: 159) suggest that he presents himself as the *"key actor in the partnership"*. This highlights the dilemma faced by the couple to perform in a feminine industry favouring a stereotypically female approach whilst managing *"external stakeholder requirements"* which present a traditionally stereotypical male approach. McAdam and Marlow (2013:160) conclude that their findings support the:

> *"[...] masculinized bias informing the foundations of entrepreneurial discourse [...] knowledge is not value-free, but is developed through and within contextualized biases (Habermaa,1971) which produce and reproduce prevailing systems of power and organizing).*

Hochschild (1989) refers to the *"second shift"* that is predominantly inhabited by women and Blaisure and Allen (1995: 5) highlight that:

> *"...equality between marital partners continues to reflect the incongruency between ideology and practice. Individual couples may experience more congruency between talk and action, but the majority of married couples, the discrepancy remains".*

Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995: 77) discuss the historical changes that have occurred for intimately linked partners. They suggest that:

> *"No doubt there are chances of building up real partnerships in this current situation but equally many hazards which can drive the sexes apart and leave them in opposite lonely corners. The crux of the problem is finding a balance between being yourself and being part of a lasting togetherness with someone who is equally in search of his/her own self".*

McAdam and Marlow (2013) in their case study of a copreneurial business find that even where the wife is performing the role of the entrepreneurial lead she is still deferring to her husband as the decision maker. They suggest that the outcome from their research *"reflects expectations that the normative gendered order is persistent and institutionalised"* (p.160). This raises questions around the spousal ideologies for copreneurship and the reality of who manages the business and domestic environment of their new copreneurial lives. The current literature suggests that the couples continue to perpetuate a traditional, stereotypical way of managing the interlinked world of copreneurial business first highlighted by Marshack (1993; 1994).

Danes and Jang (2013) draw attention to the importance of understanding how couples create their copreneurial identity during new venture creation. They express the importance of a shared discourse and commitment to the entrepreneurial leader using identity theory to explore how the couples create this new identity. The study suggests

that copreneurial identity is constructed through, a competent ability to share *"venture related communication"* (p.57) that underpins spousal commitment to the business start-up and growth. Such commitment they suggest, underpins whether or not the entrepreneurial leader feels supported and verified as an entrepreneur by their spouse. This study does however take the traditional stance that the business comprises of an entrepreneurial leader and supportive spouse. This thesis builds on the work of McAdam and Marlow (2013) to explore the current gender assumptions in copreneurial micro-business as part of the exploration for this thesis of the copreneurial experience.

The chapter highlights how the extant literature pays little attention to the part that gender plays within the construction of a business by intimately linked partners. The broader debate regarding gender and entrepreneurship is relatively young (Bruni, Gherardi & Poggio, (2008) and *"the concept of entrepreneurship seems to be discriminatory, gender-biased, ethnocentrically determined and ideologically controlled"* (Ogbor, 2000: 629). Current research perpetuates the discourse on women as the supportive other to the heroic male entrepreneur.

3.6 Concluding comments

This chapter considered copreneurship as a link between the entrepreneurship and family business literature. It has reviewed the literature and drawn on concepts outside of these disciplines to expand our understanding of the roles that couples play in both the public and private domains of work and home. It has highlighted the lack of understanding of the intimate copreneurial experience in current research particularly in the context of gender, power and relational practice. All of the literature drawn on

in this chapter highlights the importance of including both psychological and sociological concepts to research into the intimate copreneurial dynamic.

It has considered four main areas to help understand spousal entrepreneurship. Firstly, it has examined the historical context of the family dynamic by looking at the social construction of work and home. It highlights how discourse on entrepreneurship continues to take a hegemonic position on the entrepreneurial role in a family business paying little attention to the relational approach to entrepreneurship.

Secondly, it has examined issues surrounding the spousal dynamic through feminist perspectives, and explored some of the theoretical debates around work and home for copreneurial micro-business. McAdam and Marlow (2013) highlighted that research needs to develop its understanding of couples who start a business together, particularly exploring the gender roles of such partners. This research argues that, gaining a greater understanding of gender role and the creation of the copreneurial character is central to achieving a more nuanced knowledge of the way in which intimately linked couples recreate their lives as copreneurs. This section draws attention to the traditional patriarchal perspective on entrepreneurship where Bruni *et al.,* (2004; 2005) highlight the gender-neutral position taken. This chapter highlighted how family business and entrepreneurship literature has failed to examine the intimate perspective (Danes & Jang, 2013; Sullivan, 2004). It has drawn attention to the need for greater consideration of the role that women play in the domestic and business domains and how they may or may not achieve greater equality of role (Millman & Martin, 2007) when entering into a professional venture with their intimate other.

Eddleston and Powell (2012) acknowledge that there is a need *"for a broader more nuanced approach to the application of feminist theories to entrepreneurial*

experiences". Without the addition of these perspectives, family business research will continue to draw on a predominantly masculine understanding of what it is to be an entrepreneur in family business.

Thirdly research exploring the gender differences and power dynamics of male and female copreneurs is limited in family business and entrepreneurship literature. There is an increasing call to understand this important part of the family business dynamic. With micro-business increasing during the economic down turn as represented by the Lord Young report (2013), this study aims to show that such couples are blending their intimate spousal roles with their new roles as creators and leaders of a copreneurial business.

Finally, this chapter considered the research looking at the ideological dilemmas faced by such partners as they perform within their copreneurial world as both intimate and business partners. It considered how this research might contribute to understanding this area of family business using a multiple perspective approach. It highlighted the need to examine in detail the influence of gender ideologies on the social construction of a copreneurial business. It highlighted the lack of focus on the relational perspective to copreneurship often embedded in the ideologies of spouses. (Sullivan, 2004) This chapter draws attention to the need to develop new conceptual and theoretical approaches to copreneurial micro-business and suggests that the addition of a gender perspective will create a more balanced approach to current knowledge of copreneurship.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4: A dramaturgical approach to research

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Goffman's perspective on life as a performance

4.3 Creating a role

4.4 Meeting Egri (1960) and creating the dramatic framework

4.5 Concluding comments

Chapter 4 A dramaturgical approach to research

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will introduce the concept of life as a socially constructed performance, drawing heavily on Goffman's (1990) dramaturgical perspective. In keeping with this thesis, it will also view this perspective on performance as gendered and embedded in the intimacy of the spousal characters previously discussed by Danes & Jang, (2013). This reflects the work of Butler (1990: xv) who talks about gender as something that we perform and suggests that:

> *"[...] performativity is not a singular act but, a repetition and ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration".*

This thesis offers a novel dramaturgical approach to understanding the formation of the copreneurial characters. Dramaturgy has previously been applied to, charismatic leadership, (Harvey, 2001), impression management, (Gardner & Avolio, 1998) and entrepreneurship (Anderson, 2005). It has however, never been applied to copreneurial identity formation as far as this researcher is aware.

This chapter will look at Goffman's (1990) approach to character formation and introduce the work of Egri (1960) to create a dramatic framework to present the findings from the analysis. Egri (1960) introduces the notion that before a plot or drama is constructed we must first understand the identity of the characters and their motivation for inhabiting the stage. This will enable the researcher to develop a new framework on which to understand the copreneurial experience.

This chapter will draw on the literature to help provide further insight into the power of understanding the formation of copreneurial character as part of a recreation of intimate characters embedded in the spousal relationships in this study.

4.2 Goffman's perspective on life as a performance

Goffman's seminal work (1990) *"The presentation of self in everyday life"* explores the way in which individuals create their identity through performance. This performance manifested through the socio/economic and cultural world in which each character exists can, he suggests, changes according to the scene the actor inhabits. This contributes to a different approach to understanding identity formation, whereby the characters created and presented to the world are a combination of early life experience (Chodorow, 1978) as discussed in the previous chapter, and the character created to present a particular impression to a particular audience.

Goffman (1990: 14) discusses the creation of *"sign activity"* which is the impression that a performer *"gives and the expression he gives off"*. He explains that the first perspective involves verbal communication to impart the basic information for the observer to understand who they are dealing with. The second form of sign activity is more complex and presents actions that are *"symptomatic of the actor"* (p.14). That is it creates a character fit to inhabit the scene they are in, even if they must create a character built on *"deceit"* or *"feigning"* (p.14). Goffman (1990: 14) suggests that people create *"promissory"* characters capable of playing their role in the scene in which they are co-performing, where in turn the other players must accept the version offered up to them for scrutiny. They are socially interacting with the other characters who in turn present a version of themselves to their audience. That is to say that, we all create masks that represent facets of ourselves and put them on according to the

impression we want to create. This perspective offers a different approach to examining copreneurial identity formation using the notion of character creation. This allows insight into how couples recreate their intimate drama to create a more public copreneurial character. It will enable the researcher to explore how the participants articulate their understanding of businesses creation and ownership, and consequently how they manifest their characters and the impression of a business owner to their audience.

4.3 Creating a role

Goffman (1990: 28) introduces us to a couple who have chosen to take over the ownership of a hotel in Shetland. He describes the recreation of their role as middle class professionals that is contra to their original characterisation of themselves as working class Shetland locals. They strive to create an environment where their customers feel comfortable which requires them to create a middle class role for themselves. Goffman describes this as a *"masquerade"* and suggests that the performers may or may not believe in the new characters that they have created. He suggests that:

> *"At one extreme, one finds that the performer can be fully taken in by his own act; he can be sincerely convinced that the impression of reality which he stages is the real reality. When his audience is also convinced in this way about the show he put on- and this seems to be the typical case- then for the moment at least, only the sociologists or socially disgruntled will have any doubts about the 'realness' of what is presented".* (P.28)

At the other extreme Goffman (1990: 28) suggests that the performer may not believe in their performance and simply presents it to the audience as *"a means to other ends".*

It is interesting that he introduces a copreneurial business, but pays no attention to the joint formation of the intimate characters or the role that relational connection and intimacy may play in the formation of the newly created characters. Anderson (2005) he suggests that the theatrical metaphor is an *"additional tool"* (p.588) to enhance our understanding of the entrepreneurial process recommending that it is considered as part of a *"social process, where enterprise arises from social and economic exchange"* (Holmquist & Lindgren, 2002 in Anderson, 2005: 587).

Wilshire (1982) explores the metaphor of theatre as a means of understanding the formation of human identity. He suggests that:

> *What if theatre renders in a thematic and deliberate way what is already going on undeliberatley in the development of self, hence extends and fulfils it-the incorporation mimetically into a conscious body of other's ways of being and of others' views of itself".*
>
> Wilshire (1982: 3)

He explores the concept of dramaturgy as a means to understand the ways in which identity creation and the social construction of human self and being is *"theatre-like"*. He suggests that theatre enables us to understand the principles of being human and offers a perspective that suggests:

> *"[...] knowledge of the principles of theatre throws light on analogous conditions of being human that must be understood before anything about the self can. Thus theatre is historically posterior but ontologically or logically prior".*
>
> Wilshire (1982: 4)

This thesis will aim to apply the concept of dramaturgy to copreneurial micro-business. It offers a novel perspective to explore the co-creation of the copreneurial script, highlighting the way in which an intimately linked couple are able to recreate their spousal identity. This thesis will present an interpretation of the couples as players in their own drama created from their copreneurial stories offering an empirical insight into the complexities of copreneurial business. This study will establish theoretical links with the family business literature by introducing a new way of understanding the formation of copreneurial character, particularly with respect to developing a greater understanding of the performance of family embeddedness in family business research (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003).

4.3.1 Setting up the social front

The performance presented in a scene or play to an audience for a specific period or purpose referred to as, the *"front"* Goffman (1990: 32). He calls this:

> *"...the part of the individuals performance that regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance".*

He suggests that such a front creates the production around the characters including the set, costumes, make-up, props and lighting to name just a part of the creation of a play. Goffman (1990:33) argues that the setting must be present for the performance to take place, and that the performers create *"sign equipment"* to identify each scene. It could be argued that dual career couples create their various scenes around work and home where a more clear delineation can be presented in keeping with Goffman's perspective (1990). However, this research aims to consider the more complex *"front"* created by the copreneurs who do not move so easily between each scene due to the

complex and enmeshed world in which they live and work. This moves into the realm of the *"personal front"* (Goffman, 1990: 34) where we will find the intimate world of the performer which breaks into two areas:

> ***"Appearance"*:** This tells the audience what social status the performer is. It also tells us whether we are observing the performer in an official working or leisure capacity. It also highlights where in the lifecycle the performer is.
>
> ***"Manner"*:** This demonstrates how the performer will interact with their environment. Which in the case of a female copreneur with children may present a busy parent attempting to run the business in the home environment.
>
> (Terms taken from Goffman, 1990: 35).

Goffman (1990) explains in his work that the social front can be something that a character can create to elevate their status to their audience. This is examined in detail in Chapter 6 of this thesis as part of the analysis into spousal motivation to become copreneurs. Dramaturgy thus draws attention to the active part the performers play in recreating their socially constructed world to present their new characters to their audience. Anderson (2005) refers to Turner's (1974) term *"liminality"* which describes a stage of movement or transformation, where a person is in the process of becoming something else. He suggests that entrepreneurship fits well with this concept suggesting that:

> *"For entrepreneurship, liminality emphasizes the process of becoming something different. In part bound up with the past, but also presenting a possible future"* (p.591).

This draws on the concept of a complex or simple plot discussed by Tierno (2002) in his study of Aristotle's *"Poetics"* whereby the characters are involved in constructing their drama around events that occur in their lives. In Butcher's translation (2012: 15) he describes a simple plot as:

> *"...an action that is simple and defined...when the change of fortune takes place without reversal of the situation or without recognition".*

A complex plot will contain a *"reversal of fortune/discovery"* explored in the context of the copreneurial stories in this thesis. This researcher will join the argument that to construct such simple or complex stories we must first understand the characters who construct the drama (Egri, 1960). This supports the concept of liminality as the characters participating in this thesis narrate the transformation of their intimate lives.

This approach will contribute to an understanding of the process of creating a family business drawing on the copreneurial stories to help understand the part that the intimate characters play in this transformation of their intimate identity. The next section will explore the intimate spousal identity and the part that idealization plays in constructing the new copreneurial script.

4.3.2 The spousal ideology

Creating an idealized version of oneself to the audience is a common theme in the literature that examines the copreneurial dynamic through a feminist lens. McAdam and Marlow (2013) use an ideological dilemma perspective to explore the complexities of the copreneurial business. They highlight the difficulties of managing the socially constructed, gendered relationship embedded in intimacy. They suggest that:

> *"...an ideological dilemma is a social practice that enables individuals to accommodate and make sense of everyday situations despite facing conflicting or contradictory signals and demands"* (p. 154).

Goffman (1990) suggests that we all present ourselves to our audience in a way that will *"...incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values of the society..."* which in the case of the copreneurs represents the commonly held understanding of what an intimate, spousal relationship should represent. That is the continued socially constructed perspective positioning men in the public domain of paid work and women in the private domain performing a relational, supportive role. Added to this assumption of what such a relationship should represent are the commonly held societal beliefs of what an entrepreneurial character should look like.

The literature takes little consideration of the effect that the spousal ideologies have on the day-to-day management of a copreneurial business. This thesis will contribute to this debate by exploring the ways in which the couples describe how they manage the business and domestic as part of their newly constructed copreneurial lives.

Goffman (1990) states that, characters create a version of themselves that creates a positive, socially mobile character aspiring to create the best version of themselves to their audience. He suggests that characters demonstrate social mobility, highlighting the way in which people aim for the idealized, higher version of societal life.

Blaisure and Allen (1995: 5) discussed the incongruency between the discussion on an equal division of labour in spousal households and the reality. Hochschild (1989) refers to household labour as the *"second shift"* for women and highlights the difference between the idealized perspective on an equal household and the reality for most spouses. Chell and Baines (2012: 124), looking at the affect that gender has on

micro-business performance, found that spousal business demonstrated the lowest business turnover and highest incidence of stereotypical behaviour amongst the businesses considered (Chell & Baines, 1998). This highlights the criteria used to examine determinants for success in business often equated predominantly to the financial benefits to owning a business. Whilst an important factor to owning a business this thesis will aim to demonstrate how many of the couples articulated their idealized copreneurial stories around very different non-economic criteria.

This is in keeping with the work of Bird and Brush (2002) who examine the feminine approach to entrepreneurship that promotes a more integrated (Chell & Baines, 2012), relational (Fletcher, 2001) approach to copreneurial business. This thesis will contribute to this discussion by drawing on the importance of understanding the part that the intimate relationship plays in creating the new spousal performance. The adoption of a tripartite framework consisting of a dramaturgical perspective (Goffman, 1990), which forms the major theoretical contribution of this thesis, and gender (Bird & Brush, 2002) and family embeddedness (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003) perspectives, that will enable a more detailed examination of the complexities of the copreneurial experience.

4.4 Meeting Egri (1960) and creating the dramatic framework

This thesis aims to contribute to theory by drawing on the theatrical metaphor to help to explain the creation of the copreneurial character using Goffman's (1990) dramaturgical perspective. This will form the main structure of this researcher's tripartite approach to theory building. This next section will introduce the theatrical approach by drawing on literature outside of the entrepreneurship and family business literature.

Stanislavski (1985) created a method that has become the bedrock of many actors approach to creating a more realistic performance to an audience. His technique known as the *"Stanislavski system"* or more commonly the *"method"* challenges an actor to break down any preconceptions, assumed or idealized impressions of a character. Stanislavski explains that:

> *"...the very power of this method lies in the fact that it was not concocted or invented by anyone. Both in spirit and in body it is part of our organic natures. It is based on the laws of nature. The birth of a child, the growth of a tree, the creation of an artistic image are all manifestations of a kindred order. How can we come closer to this nature of creation? ... It is not possible to invent a system. We are born with it inside us, with an innate capacity for creativeness. This last is our natural necessity, therefore it would seem that we could not know how to express it except in accordance with a natural system"* (Stanislavski, 1968: 287).

This thesis will argue that to understand the copreneurial story we must first understand the characters creating the drama. Egri (1960: xiv) controversially suggests that character formation should come before the creation of plot in contrast to Aristotle whom he claims, *"... denied the importance of character"*. Aristotle in Butchers translation, (1990: 21) stated that:

> *"Tragedy is an imitation of persons who are above the common level, the example of good portrait-painters should be followed. They, while reproducing the distinctive form of the original, make likeness which is true to life and yet more beautiful".*

It could be argued that in creating the entrepreneurial drama the authors have followed a similar idealized approach, considering only one patriarchal perspective. This has formed the foundation of how the entrepreneurial stories are created whereby characters outside of the accepted heroic script are rendered invisible to the audience.

It is clear whenever we attend the theatre or watch a film that we must engage with, and care about the characters in the story if we are to gain a deeper understanding of the drama we are observing. We participate in an emotional relationship with the characters in the story if we are to achieve a satisfactory understanding of their lives. This is also true for the copreneurial stories in this study who narrate how they embed the new script in their spousal and family relationships. This thesis will contribute to a more idiographic approach to understanding the formation of a copreneurial character through a theatrical lens. It will shine a light on the copreneurial stories, highlighting the struggle between the idealized starting point for the copreneurs and the reality of the day-to-day scripts created.

4.4.1 Defining the premise for copreneurship

> *"The premise of each second contributes to the premise of the minute of which it is a part, just as each minute gives its bit of life to the hour, and the hour to the day. And so, at the end, there is a premise for every life"* (Egri, 1960:1).

Understanding the premise or goal for any character in a story is central to the formation of a drama or narrative to a life. Egri (1960) describes the importance of understanding every detail of the intricate lives involved in creating the structure of a play or story. This creates a framework around Goffman's (1990) proposition that we are all performers in the various scenes that make up our day-to-day lives. Egri (1960: 4) suggests that to create or discover the premise to a story we must first understand

the *"motivational force"* of the character formed through ambition. This researcher will draw on this perspective to gain a more nuanced understanding of the motivations for a couple to recreate their intimate story to become a copreneurial business.

Birley and Westhead (1994) in their study of 405 owner-managers of a new business looking at business start-up reasons identified twenty-three motivational factors to new venture creation in the extant literature. These motivations ranged from, the desire for autonomy, innovation and reduction in tax burden to a desire to contribute to family and community welfare (p.11). They applied cluster analysis to their findings and discovered seven founder types*: "insecure, followers, status avoiders, the confused, the tax avoiders, the community and the unfocused"* (p.7). This study highlights the diversity of new venture creation motivations and the emotional/relational as well as economic reasons for business start-up. They found that the reasons for business start-up had very little effect on business growth, wealth creation or employment for the business participants (p.8).

Birley and Westhead (1994) express the importance of gaining greater knowledge of the *"personal characteristics of the entrepreneur"* perpetuating the individualistic perspective. This highlights the continued tendency for the extant literature to examine the lone entrepreneurial character who is usually male (Danes & Jang, 2013; Kirkwood, 2009; Townsend, Busenitz & Arthurs, 2010) and the supporting cast.

There has been nominal debate around the female entrepreneurial lead and supportive male spouse (Kirkwood, 2009; McAdam & Marlow, 2013). In her exploration of the role the spouse plays in the motivations for business start-up Kirkwood (2009) refers to the term spouse as meaning *"wife, husband, partner, or a de-facto partner"* (p.372). Her study found that spousal involvement had an effect on the motivation for

entrepreneurship. The study highlighted that it was more important for a woman entrepreneur to have the support of her spouse than for her male counterpart was. She also found that women were more likely to be part of a copreneurial business than entrepreneurial men were with a quarter of her study identifying themselves as part of a joint business with their husbands. This highlights the need to understand the different approaches to entrepreneurship particularly from an intimate relational perspective. This thesis will contribute to the current research by carrying out an empirical study of fourteen copreneurial businesses to gain a more in-depth understanding of this dynamic.

Egri (1960) highlights the importance of the part that the author plays in constructing a good drama based on the premise, and the role the audience perform in making sense of the finished play. Egri (1960: 9) suggests that:

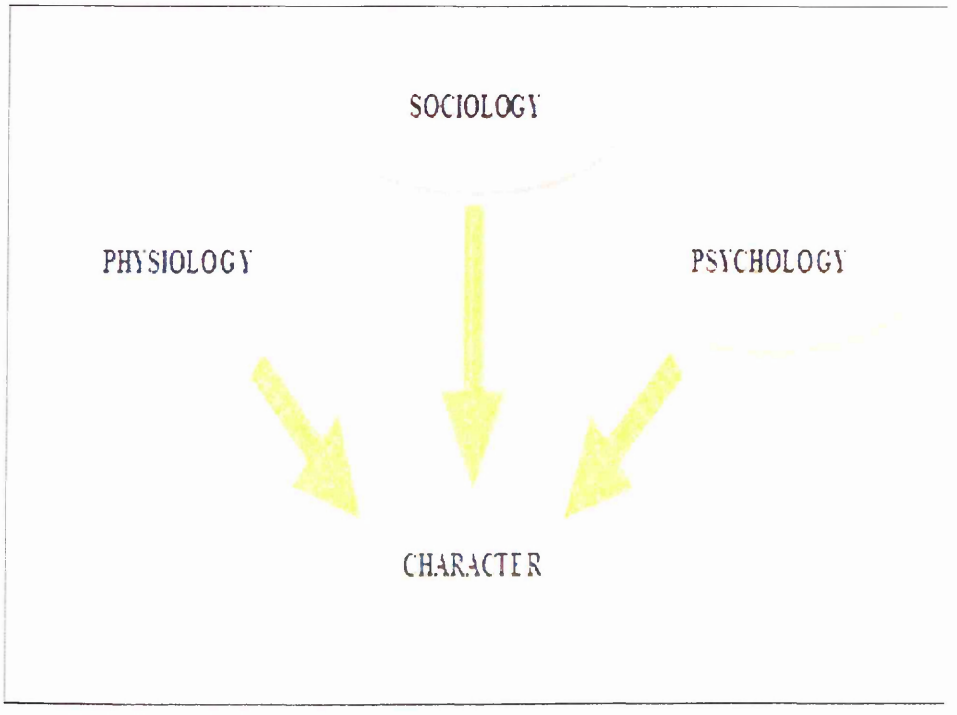
> *"We the readers or spectators of your play, do not necessarily agree with your conviction. Through your play you must therefore prove to us the validity of your contention".*

This approach will embody the role this researcher will play in the presentation of the findings from analysis of the copreneurial narratives. Chapter 5 will introduce the methodological approach to this thesis developing the part that dramaturgy will play in the presentation of this researchers findings. It will explore the ways in which spouses articulate the construction of their copreneurial identities/characters. This will offer new insight into the part that gender and power play in the reconstruction of the couples on stage and backstage lives through relational and dramaturgical lenses.

4.4.2 Creating the pivotal characters

The previous section has highlighted the importance of establishing a premise or motivation to become a copreneurial character, this next section will explore the construction of the *"pivotal"* (Egri, 1960: 106) or main characters in the drama that will form the basis for this study. Egri on discussing what makes a character suggests that there are three dimensions to a character (see Fig. 4). The first dimension presents the audience with the outward physicality of a character formed through their biological and socio-cultural environment. It can determine how this character will perceive itself and consequently how it will respond to and, observed by others. The response of the other characters within each scene in their lives will determine how they present themselves to subsequent audiences. A physically healthy woman or man may receive a different response to an unhealthy person which Egri (1960: 33) states will colour our impression of the character that we are observing.

Figure 4: Framework for constructing the pivotal characters (Egri, 1960)



This supports Goffman's (1990: 44) perspective suggesting that:

> *"...performance is 'socialized' moulded, and modified to fit into the understanding of expectations of the society in which it is presented".*

The characters in this study articulate through their detailed narratives, an impression of copreneurial business that does not fit with the socially acceptable, patriarchal face of entrepreneurship. Ogbor (2000: 605) points to the conventional perspective on entrepreneurship in the extant literature that is:

> *"...legitimizing and reinforcing dominant societal ideologies as bases of power, instruments of control and relations domination".*

The sociology of the character encompasses the environmental, cultural, spiritual, class, economic and kinship relationships combined to inform who the character is. In Morgan's (1996:5) influential sociological work, he reminds us to:

> *"...think about family relationships in a wider context of overlapping ties of family, kindred, friends and neighbours. In institutional terms this entailed a willingness to see continuities between work and non-work, home and the workplace, the public and the private".*

When considering the sociological and the physiological dimensions combined, Egri (1960: 35) suggests we are able to construct the psychological dimension to a character. This approach to understanding and creating a character provides a powerful framework to consider the complexities of the copreneurial character embedded within Morgan's *"overlapping ties"* of family life. The family plays an important part in the formation of many new businesses in the form of emotional support particularly from a spouse (Gudmunson, Danes, Werbel & Loy, 2009), family

and household capital (Danes, Stafford, Haynes Amarapurkar, 2009; Rodriguez, Tuggle & Hackett, 2009) and spousal capital (Matzek, Gudmunson & Danes, 2010). This contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the family embeddedness perspective discussed in Chapter 2 (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003; Arregle *et al.,* 2013; Fletcher, 2010), by developing a more in-depth understanding of the role that the intimate spousal characters perform within the family system.

Family embeddedness theory emphasises the need to consider the importance of the family system in the creating of a family business (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003; Smith-Acuña, 2011). Current discourse continues to position women in a supportive role in family business that reinforces the gendered division of labour. Ogbor (2000: 608) suggests that such discourse on entrepreneurship serves to enhance the many divisions amongst humans including gender. This study will contribute to an understanding of the copreneurial experience by adopting a tripartite approach drawing on dramaturgical, gender, and family embeddedness perspectives. This will develop an approach more able to draw out the rich complexities of the construction of a copreneurial micro-business.

4.4.3 Spousal life transitions and the construction of a copreneurial micro-business

Fletcher (2010: 453) points to the importance of acknowledging the changes in family life over time as the main strength in adopting a family embeddedness perspective. She suggests that this enables the researcher to *"circumvent"* the *"analytical dualisms"* that have been present in family business studies that determine that entrepreneurship and family are two separate domains of research. Spousal life transitions play an important part in this study, and highlight the necessity of considering family history and the stages a couple have reached in their family lives over time. Fletcher (2010)

highlights that empirical studies of couples relations in a copreneurial business are rare. This study will demonstrate how gaining a deeper understanding of the relational perspective of a copreneurial business will add to the call for greater understanding of how *"co-preneurship evolves into (or from) family start-up situations"* (p.253).

Morgan (1996: 136) discusses the growing consideration of time and space from a family perspective, and a focus on the home as a social and domestic space for families, he suggests:

> *"...time and space are key axes around which the analysis of family processes should be developed. Family relationships are relationships that are established, and broken, over time".*

Morgan discusses *"multiplicities"* of time whereby a family manages their different family duties and careers within the traditional nuclear family. He points to the creation of different *"projects"* or *"individual biographies"* for family members (p.141). This offers insight into the complexities of managing a copreneurial dynamic where the spouses create a shared business biography that redefines their public and private spaces. This is a major contribution of this thesis adding to the debate on the copreneurial experience and offering a new way of looking at copreneurial business as a third domain where the public and private collide. Couples no longer have the discussion around what their partner did that day, as they have both inhabited the same space and time and so, must recreate the way they manage their day-to day working and home relationship. This thesis will highlight the problems that arise with such couples particularly when working from home, in their personal, marital, and close kin relationships. Morgan (1996: 37) discusses the discourse on the household

suggesting that it continues to focus on *"...quasi-economic models than with accounts that take seriously the complexities of emotional life"*.

He goes on to discuss the work of Connell (1987) who, he suggests, highlights the fact that the social perspective on what constitutes a housewife and a husband is embedded in a blend of *"emotional relations, power and the divisions of labour"* (Morgan, 1996: 37). Such notions of the spousal relationship form the basis for this study aiming to apply this concept to the context of copreneurial business. This will consider both the individual and spousal dimensions to the recreation of the intimate spousal characters to perform their new copreneurial characters.

4.5 Concluding comments

This chapter has presented perspectives not currently applied to copreneurial business research. A tripartite interpretative approach offers a more nuanced means of understanding the copreneurial experience. This will develop empirically a more in-depth understanding of the relational and performative dimensions of copreneurial business.

McAdam and Marlow (2013) suggest that current research on what part gender plays in the performance of entrepreneurship continues to concentrate on *"women's experiences"*. They point to the continuing gender bias towards a patriarchal perspective on entrepreneurship and point to a growing critique of this approach (Hamilton (2014). They highlight the growing interest in challenging the notion that *"women are coterminous with gender"* (p.151), that is that men enact the social norm and women perform gender, thus highlighting them as other than the normal face of entrepreneurship. They ask us to consider this in context of a copreneurial business where we reverse the normative position and the woman is the entrepreneurial lead

(p.151). This research will be drawing on dramaturgical and relational perspectives to understand the roles that couples perform in a copreneurial drama. It will adopt a gender perspective to enhance the current understanding of family embeddedness in family business thus offering a more balanced perspective on owning a business with an intimate other.

The dramaturgical perspective in this chapter offers a novel approach to examining the empirical material to gain a more in-depth understanding of the copreneurial experience. Anderson (2005: 599) states that:

> *"We can learn what is like to be an entrepreneur. If we apply a dramaturgical perspective, 'the world as it is performed' we can readily discern the entrepreneurial performance, watch, learn and critique the micro social actions of the entrepreneur".*

This thesis will contribute both empirically and theoretically to the area of entrepreneurship and family business by offering further insight into the social construction of copreneurial character. Chapter 5 will explain how this researcher developed the methodological and analytical approach to carrying out this study.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Methodology

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Choosing the methodology

5.3 Interview design

5.4 Learning from the pilot interviews

5.5 Method of analysis

5.6 Acknowledging the part the researcher plays in IPA

5.7 Making sense of the chaos: Analysing the main study

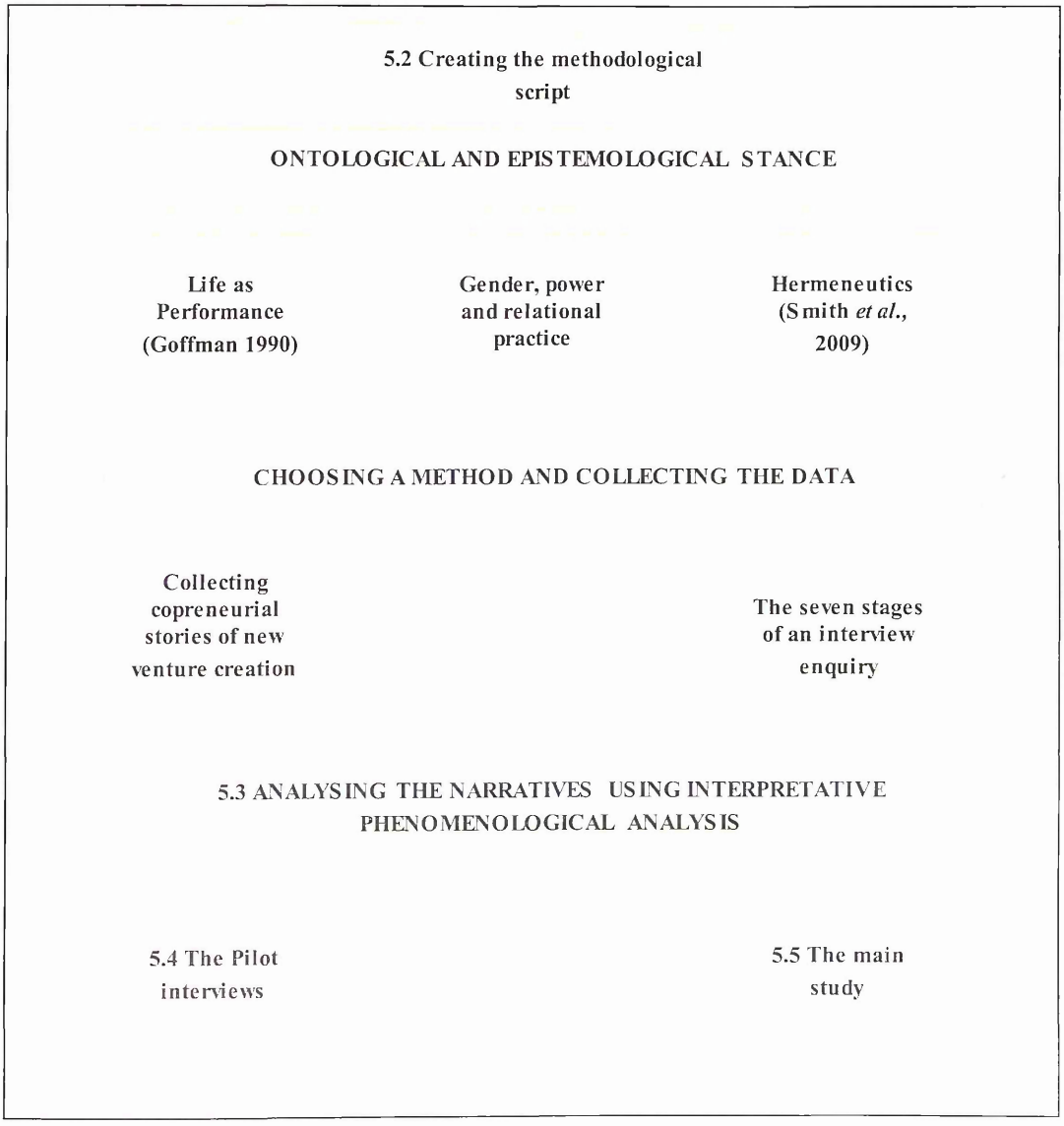
5.8 Positioning the research within the disciplines of family business and entrepreneurship literature

Chapter 5 - Methodology

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is twofold, firstly to establish the philosophical journey of this thesis demonstrating the ontological, epistemological and methodological dilemmas faced by this researcher in part one and secondly outline the design for the study in part two. The structure of the chapter is set out below (Fig. 5).

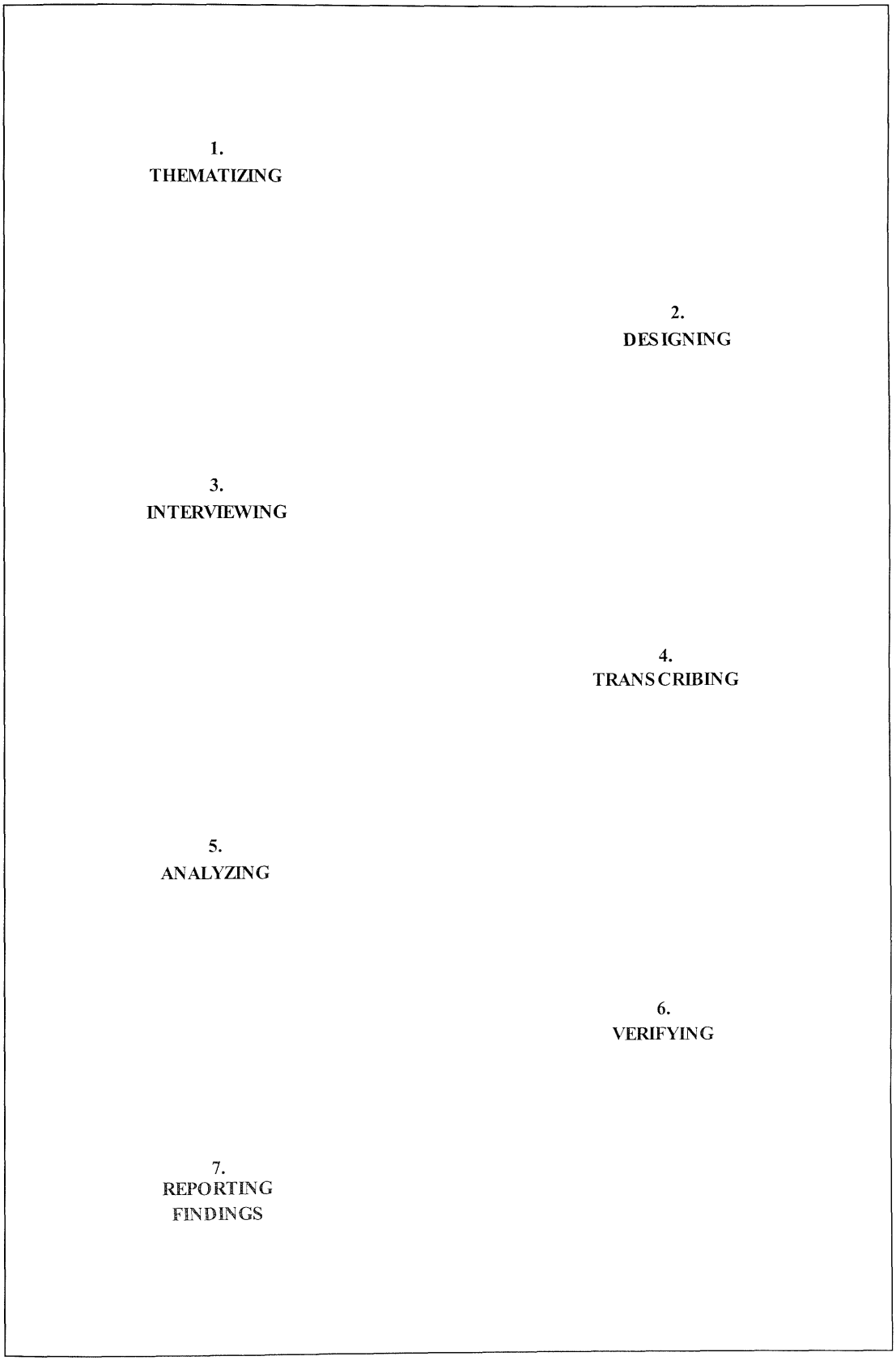
Figure 5: Creating the methodological script



The research draws on an empirical study of twenty-six participants in fourteen micro businesses owned by married or cohabiting couples. The interview approach adopts interpretative phenomenological techniques comparable to those employed by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009). It identifies themes from the taped and fully transcribed interviews adopting a hermeneutic circle approach to interpretation (Smith *et al.*, 2009: 27).

The first section of this chapter describes the development of the philosophical positioning for this thesis drawing on three important perspectives to build the structure of the study. In order to elicit the stories of the couples open interviews initially were conducted initially informed by Kvale and Brinkmanns' (2009: 102) seven stages of an interview enquiry (Fig. 6, p.87). This offered a useful starting point in providing the basic building blocks for the design of my methodological approach.

Figure 6: Kvale and Brinkmann (2009: 102) seven stages of an interview enquiry



Kvale and Brinkmann (2009: 102) describe this linear process as a good starting point when developing a research design but also suggest the adoption of flexibility when moving through this process (p.103). In order to draw on a method of analysis and interpretation better suited to understanding the nature of the copreneurial experience interpretative phenomenological analysis was then explored (Giorgi, 1997; 2011; Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006; Smith *et al.,* 2009). This provided a means to take a more idiographic approach, enabling a more in-depth analysis of the copreneurial stories. It offered a means to explore the ontological question of *"existence itself"* (Heiddegger, 1962; Smith, 2004; Smith *et al.,* 2009: 16) in the context of the intimate, spousal relationships involved in the creation of a copreneurial business.

Section 5.3 explores the complexities of this approach highlighted in the pilot studies. Section 5.4, illustrates how the pilot interviews enabled the development of my skills at interacting with the participants. I was able to adapt my approach to the main study based on the outcomes of the initial interview process. Finally, section 5.5 explores emerging themes from narratives highlighting the areas of contribution to the literature in this thesis. The (IPA) framework for analysis culminated in the three analysis chapters (Chapters 6, 7 and 8) with each focussed on a thematic area highlighted from the analysis.

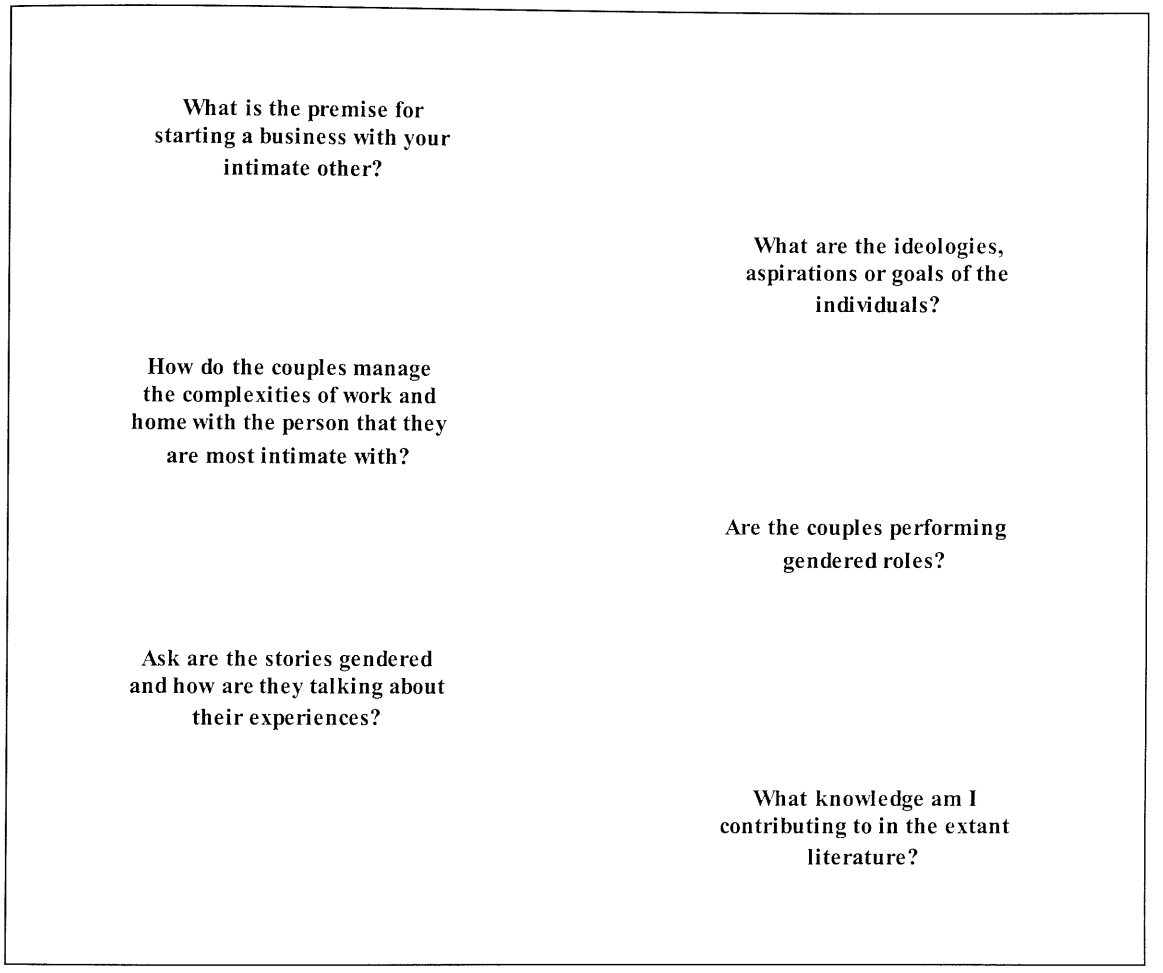
This chapter drew on a hermeneutic approach (Heiddegger, 1962; Ricoeur, 1975; 1981; Smith *et al.,* 2009) to interpretation. Hermeneutics are the means by which we can understand how the sense making process takes place. Smith *et al.,* (2009) suggest that in depth research represents a triple hermeneutic which draws on the three strands of sense making that take place in IPA to produce a homogenized whole explained further in section 5.2.1.

The beginning of the philosophical journey for me involved a great deal of exploration of the literature to position the ontological, epistemological and methodological starting point, and battling through the varied approaches to studying entrepreneurial phenomena. Mason (2002) suggests that we start by asking ourselves some difficult questions to enable the dialogue to begin. The research has grown out of my performance as part of a copreneurial couple who managed our own business between 2006 and 2010. We both entered into the business domain with no prior experience having worked in the theatre industry for over twenty years. This personal starting point and the development of the research through auto-ethnographic methodology during the creation of my MA thesis lead to the philosophical starting point for this thesis embedded in dramaturgical and relational perspectives.

This developed into the formation of an initial group of questions based on conversations carried out with the six copreneurs from the previous study. I began by asking some very simple questions based on my knowledge of the prevailing discourse on entrepreneurship and how this reflected in the limited representation in the extant literature of what it is to be a copreneur. The questions set out to gain a more nuanced understanding of how couples manage the complexities of running a business and home (often in the same location). It seeks to examine who does what within the two domains and how the gender ideologies of the partners affect this demarcation of roles.

Developing the epistemological position involved developing an understanding of what methodological approach might help develop a detailed understanding of this complex world. Exploring this further enabled the development of an initial set of questions that helped to form the *"intellectual puzzle"* (Mason. 2002: 17).

Figure 7: Exploring the ontological starting point



The questions provided an ontological starting point illustrated in (Fig. 7) through which this study could begin to make sense of the narratives. Section 5.2 (p.92) examines this philosophical starting point from a dramaturgical perspective (Anderson, 2005; Goffman, 1990), and how it guided me as the playwright constructing a new drama from the narratives. The researcher takes on the role of a social scientist positioned within the theatre that is associated with qualitative research, particularly drawing on phenomenology to examine *"lived experience"* (Smith, *et al.*, 2009: 11). Dramaturgy provides a means to view this experience as part of a series of performances (Anderson, 2005; Goffman, 1990; Letwin & Stockdale, 2008; Wilshire, 1982). Hermeneutics (Heidegger, 1962; Ricoeur, 1975; Smith *et al.*, 2009; Thompson,

1998) examines what part participant, researcher and audience interpretation plays in the process of constructing the research story and, poststructural feminism (Fletcher, 2001; Miller 1977) to explore the possible gendered nature of copreneurial business practices.

To elicit the nuanced detail of the participant's stories the personal narratives of the couples were gathered through in-depth interviews based on a loosely compiled series of questions (Foddy, 1993; Hollway & Jefferson, 2000; Smith *et al.,* 2009). This enabled interpretation of the ways in which the participants constructed meaning out of their copreneurial stories. The initial intention was to enable the participants to articulate their own sense making process around the recreation of their spousal lives to become copreneurs. Section 5.3 (p. 93) explores the pilot stage of the study and how this informed the structure of the main body of the research.

Section 5.4 (p.94) introduces the theatrical metaphor to develop a framework around which the three analysis chapters are developed drawing on the work of Goffman (1990) as a theoretical starting point and introducing the work of Egri (1960) to construct the practical framework around which the chapters grow as discussed in Chapter 4. This illustrates how the three philosophical influences interweave to produce a theatre in which the drama can enfold.

5.2 Choosing the methodology

The process of choosing a methodology began by examining research methods in the entrepreneurship and family business literature, and past professional experiences in the theatre that influenced my perception of copreneurial micro-business. This thesis explores the rich, personal stories of the copreneurs which Cope (2011) suggests lends itself well to the adoption of an interpretative phenomenological methodology. Within

the philosophical context of phenomenology and hermeneutics the act of *"being"* (Heidegger, 1962; Ricoeur, 1975; 1998) can be interpreted as a performance by players who are creating their meaning and actions through discourse in relation to others. Such a position in the context of this thesis concerns the intimate spousal relationship articulating the creation of their copreneurial characters. Ricoeur (1998: 117) suggests that:

> *"[...] hermeneutic philosophy begins with the experience of art, which is not necessarily linguistic. Moreover it accentuates, in this experience, the more ontological aspects of the experience of play [ludique] as well as the theatrical sense of the word. For it is in the participation of the players in a game that we find the first experience of belonging susceptible of being examined by the philosopher".*

Using a phenomenological approach enables the researcher to draw meaning which is *"latent"* or *"disguised"* (Smith *et al.,* 2009: 24) from the copreneurial narratives, whilst acknowledging that they are not a neutral player in the process. They also bring their historical baggage with them in the form of prior research or life experience.

5.2.1 The hermeneutic circle

The hermeneutic circle is a concept common to most proponents of hermeneutic theory (Smith *et al.,* 2009) and concerns the *"dynamic relationship between the part and the whole, at a series of levels"* (p.28). It takes into consideration the nuances of language from a single word to the broader meaning of a sentence or a whole text Smith *et al.,* (2009) present an example of such relationships in (Table 2, p.93).

THE PART	THE WHOLE
The single word	The sentence in which the word is embedded
The single extract	The complete text
The particular text	The complete oeuvre
The interview	The research project
The single episode	The complete life

Table 2: Dynamic relationship between the part and the whole, at a series of levels (Smith *et al.*, 2009: 28)

This approach enabled the researcher to draw rich meaning from the narratives using it as part of an iterative process, where meaning is derived from moving between the detail and the broader picture.

5.2.2 Putting on the philosophical costume

It is important to find ones place in the research drama as part of the ensuing action that will be presented to the reader who themselves will perform the role of the critic as part of the hermeneutic circle. Knowing what character, you are playing, and what paradigm you inhabit informs how the research will develop over time. Goffman (1990: 28) suggests that:

> "*When an individual plays a part he implicitly requests his observers take seriously the impression that is fostered before them. They are asked to believe that the character they see actually possesses the attributes he appears to possess, that the task he performs will have the consequences that are what they appear to be. In line with this, there is the popular view that the individual offers his performance and puts on his show 'for the benefit of the*

> *other people'. It will be convenient to begin in a consideration of performances by turning the question around and looking at the individuals own belief in the impression of reality that he attempts to engender in those whom he finds himself".*

Deciding what ontological costume to put on enabled me to decide what theoretical approach to adopt. The research was born out of a personal interest in gaining a detailed understanding of the copreneurial phenomena. This highlights the possible limitations of entering into this study as a woman who has been part of a copreneurial business. In keeping with (IPA) this presents a complex character to the research process performing dual roles as both interpreter and informed listener. Smith *et al.* (2009: 55) suggest that adopting (IPA) will present the researcher with *"a certain amount of unpredictability, chaos and mess"*. They identify that we all bring our personal experiences to the research process and that as qualitative researchers it is important to acknowledge this as part of the interpretative process.

5.2.3 Relationship is at the heart of the story: Drawing on multiple perspectives to interpret the narratives

The starting point for the research was a desire to understand how the participant's articulate the reconstruction of their intimate spousal lives to become copreneurs. The literature review began by examining the debate on copreneurial business in Chapter 2. (Blenkinsopp & Owens, 2010; Cramton, 1993; Danes & Jang, 2013; Fletcher, 2010) and gender role (Ahl, 2003; 2006; Bird & Brush, 2002) in particular the lack of emphasis on the collective spousal identity (Danes & Jang, 2013) in the family business and entrepreneurship literature. Very little emphasis has been placed on the intertwined (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003; Hamilton, 2006) journey performed by copreneurs

with a continued representation of entrepreneurship as a cave like experience performed by an individual heroic male (Hamilton 2006). The literature presented a number of philosophical approaches developing a particular view on the family business dynamic. This representation concentrated particularly on conflict (Danes, 2011; Powell & Eddleston, 2013) with a lack of focus on the relational perspective. This lead to an exploration of the psychological literature in Chapter 3 (Chodorow, 1979; Miller, 1977; Smith-Acuña, 2011), which developed into an exploration of the feminist and gender perspectives (Harrington, Litosseliti, Sauntson & Sunderland, eds., 2008; Mills & Mullany, 2011; Oakley, 2005; Talbot, 2010) that framed the argument for exploring masculine and feminine ways of performing in the public and private domains. Miller (1977) suggests that men recruit women into the public domain for their relational competencies.

5.2.4 Weaving in the feminist perspective: Feminist post-structuralism

Feminist post-structuralism concentrates on the gendered nature of knowledge production (Ahl, 2006) which, in entrepreneurship literature continues to privilege the dominant patriarchal voice and render female dimensions invisible in (Hamilton, 2013a).

The choice to use a feminist perspective developed out of an interest to understand what part feminine dimensions (Bird & Brush, 2002) played in the creation and construction of a copreneurial business. This presents a relational, integrated approach to entrepreneurship explored in Chapter 4 p.74. This offered up an opportunity to contribute to the debate on female voice and family business (Hamilton, 2006) by adopting a feminist poststructuralist perspective by looking at the part that gender identity plays in the formation of a copreneurial business. This contributes to

knowledge by suggesting that the family embeddedness debate lacks a gender perspective. This perspective enables a more nuanced consideration of complex dynamic of a family business, and the part that gender ideology plays in the formation of the roles performed by its participants. This highlights the need to explore different approaches to entrepreneurship.

Miller (1977) suggests that to achieve human growth both, personal or organisational there needs to be a connection to others, particularly for women. This relational approach offers an alternative feminist perspective to the more prevalent *"malestream"* (Gatrell, 2004: 48) theories *"which had been developed listening only to men's experiences"* (Fletcher, 2001; Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver, & Surrey, 1991, eds; Miller, 1977). They suggested that organisations perceive traits attributed to women, such as empathy, vulnerability and nurturing as weaknesses in the workplace. The relational perspective argues that such attributes are beneficial to the wellbeing of an organisation (Buttner, 2001; Fletcher & Jacques, 1999). This relational approach forms part of the research question for this thesis by examining the different approaches to entrepreneurship articulated by the copreneurs in this study.

5.2.5 Using a theatrical metaphor to explore the copreneurial narratives

> *"Theatre cannot be articulated with the same dispatch as a spatial figure can be, for theatre is already an implicit phenomenological variation on the meaning of human being and doing, and it is sprung up between the persons in the world".*
>
> (Wilshire, 1991: 20)

The theatrical metaphor offers a means to explore the ways in which human beings improvise and enact their daily lives in relation to each other. Wilshire, (1991) refers to the enactment of self as part of the creation of *"they-self"*, forming part of a group identity. He suggests that this creates the *"mimetic involvement between persons which is theatre itself, and much of life itself"* (p.18). This supports a feminist perspective envisioning life as connected and relational.

Wilshire (1991: 17) argues that life is constructed through rehearsal and performance embedded in relationship. He suggests that we can perceive the creation and enactment of self in the context of a theatrical performance, where we create a character in response to socially embedded experiences. He refers to the early mimetic behaviour of a baby who learns to recreate parental facial expressions to elicit a positive response.

5.2.6 Building the dramaturgical structure around the research design

> *"The academic-philosophical use of the imagination typically involves only the mental acts of an individual phenomenologist, while theatre involves the imaginative use of things and bodies by a community of persons".*
>
> (Wilshire, 1991: 15)

In exploring the art of constructing a play, Egri (1960) offers an opportunity to apply a theatrical lens to the exploration of the copreneurial phenomenon. He supplies the structural means to present the copreneurial stories starting with the premise for entering into a copreneurial business. This enables exploration of the nature of entrepreneurship through a new conceptual lens.

Chapter 6 uses IPA as the idiographic starting point to analyse the premise for copreneurship. Individual stories emanating from the transcripts ascertain the reasons for couples choosing to go into business together. This forms the bone structure around which the copreneurial scripts will develop. It is at this stage that the main themes will emerge that will inform the remaining two analysis chapters.

Chapter 7 will develop an understanding of the pivotal characters who in this instance are the copreneurs. A gender perspective (Ahl, 2006; Bird & Brush, 2002; Carter, 2009; Hamilton, 2013; Marlow, Henry & Carter, 2009; McAdam & Marlow, 2013) will enable the researcher to examine the ways in which the copreneurs make sense of their spousal roles within the business and domestic domains. The researcher will contribute to the discussion by exploring to what extent the copreneurs articulate their relational competencies (Fletcher & Jacques, 1999) within the new copreneurial script. Chapter 8 will look at the copreneurial drama and contribute to the current understanding of family embeddedness within family business by using the dramaturgical conceptual framework to look at the copreneurial experience.

5.3 The interview design

This research was born out of the desire to gather and hear the detailed stories of other couples who had chosen to start a business with their spouse. Gathering the empirical material offered a plethora of possibilities that led to a great deal of confusion in the early days of this study. The research focussed on understanding the way couples make sense of their experiences of moving from their intimate characters to becoming copreneurial characters. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (Smith *et al.,* 2009) offered such an opportunity to gather and interpret in minute detail the narrated experiences of the participants in the study. Cope (2011) successfully used IPA in his

research into entrepreneurial failure suggesting that such an approach enables the researcher to explore the *"lived experience"* of the participants. Cope saw IPA as a means to construct both the design and analysis around the *"phenomenological hermeneutical"* concepts of lived experience. (Cope, 2011: 608). The approach enables the researcher to look at the small details of the participant's life as well as discover the *"common meaning"* (Smith *et al.,* 2009) that indicates possible themes and patterns to creating a copreneurial business. IPA has an idiographic starting point where (Smith *et al.,* 2009: 3) suggest:

> *"IPA is committed to the detailed examination of the particular case. It wants to know in detail what the experiences of this person is like, what sense this particular person is making of what is happening to them"*

This study has set out to apply an IPA approach to a larger study than is usually recommended. Smith *et al.* (2009: 106) suggest that such approach is suited to smaller samples of up to six and recommend that a larger study may determine a modified approach to the analysis of the data suggesting that:

> *"If one has a larger corpus, then almost inevitably the analysis of each case cannot be as detailed. If this is the case the emphasis must shift more to assessing what the key emergent themes were for the whole group[...]However even where the analysis is primarily at group level what makes the analysis IPA is the fact that the group level themes are still illustrated with particular examples taken from individuals"*

In keeping with (IPA) there was an initial examination of a selection of the interviews to ascertain the main themes emerging from the data. This included both pilot interviews and a random selection of the remaining transcribed interviews totalling six

in all. This enabled a broader sweep of the remaining transcripts informed by these super-ordinate themes. (Smith *et al.,* 2009: 107) suggest that IPA analysis with a larger sample *"constantly involves negotiating this relationship between convergence and divergence, commonality and individuality"*. A pilot study was carried out to determine whether IPA would illicit the outcomes required by this researcher as a basis for the main study. Two micro-businesses participated in this stage of the research.

5.3.1 Interviewing couples

On examination of the literature exploring interviewing methods there appears to be very little consideration of the techniques involved with interviewing couples (Arksey, 1996; Bietin, 2007; Bjørnholt & Gunhild, 2014). Its advantage, particularly for IPA is highlighted by Taylor & de Vocht, (2011: 1579) who suggest that:

> *"Interpretive phenomenologists recognise that it is important to consider experiences in context, and this includes the context of the couple. To study experiences in context to other people".*

This study draws on this by examining *"concurrent participants in a relationship"* (Taylor & de Vocht, 2011: 1579), looking at how the couples create a new copreneurial character. This was achieved by carrying out joint interviews, where possible, to glean how the couples communicate their interwoven stories to others (Van Auken and Werbel, 2006). Bjørnholt and Gunhild (2014) advocate the exploration of the *"self as inherently relational"* which supports this researchers' approach to this thesis. They consider:

> *"Those who make claims for the superiority of the individual research interview over the joint interview can be said to have taken the individualistic view of an autonomous and authentic self for granted. Such a view is associated with naïve realism"* (p.4).

The piloting stage in the research provided the researcher with invaluable opportunity to ascertain whether a joint interview would enable the participants to feel comfortable to divulge their copreneurial story to a stranger together, and how rich the information would be from this approach. Bjørnholt and Gunhild (2014: 3) suggest that many *"voice their scepticism"* at such an approach which they deem to be *"second best to individual interviews"*.

This, self in relationship with others underpins this thesis and has formed the basis for the choice in a gender perspective for the study. This has enabled this researcher to draw on disciplines outside entrepreneurship and family business literature to create a rich seam of knowledge to enhance further understanding of the copreneurial dynamic. It has drawn on Heidegger's concept of "*dasein*" (2014: 46) suggesting that we do not exist in isolation but as Inwood, (1997) explained in Taylor and de Vacht (2011: 1578):

> *"Dasein is essentially in the world, not simply in the sense that occupies a place in the world together with other things, but in the sense that it continually interprets and engages in other entities and the context in which they lie"*.

The purpose of engaging in couples interviews in this thesis is to explore this engagement with an intimate other as part of the creation of the performance of an "*intentional act"* (Heidegger, 1962: 73). This act of creating a concurrent story

enables the researcher to draw on the rich process of the intimately linked partners describing how they make sense of a critical moment in their relational lives.

Hamilton (2013b: 61) describes the emotional implications of entering into the qualitative interview process. She discusses the mutual interaction of the participants when the interview involves the personal stories of the participants' over time. There is an emphasis on the importance of the "*co-creation between the researcher and the researched"* where we can learn about the *"social phenomena"* of lived experience (p. 60).

This proved to be an important part of creating the right atmosphere for the participants, where they were divulging deeply personal details about themselves. The female respondents, where the male partner was unable to attend, were far more uncomfortable divulging details of their partner's role in the business and home than the joint interviews. This highlights the possibility of considering Wilshire's (1991: 15) assertion that we construct character and story in collaboration with others. In this case, the women attempt to construct the duologue without their co-partner in the drama.

5.3.2 The ethical considerations to interviewing spouses

The starting point for this study was to ensure that all respondents felt happy and were aware of the use of their interviews. The study ran in accordance with the institutional ethics code of practice for carrying out qualitative research. Smith *et al.,* (2009) highlight the difficulties of carrying out qualitative research where they will have anonymity but not confidentiality. During the initial contact phase, and then again during the interview it was made clear how the interview would be used and how the respondents personal and company names would be changed to provide anonymity.

Central to the interview approach was the avoidance of harm to both respondent and interviewer. A regular review of the process enabled the researcher to adapt to the changing nature of such qualitative interviewing where the couples talked about personal and professional experiences. The participants were aware of their right to withdraw from the research at any time during data collection and prior to publication. The respondents were made aware of the right to withdraw twice, firstly during an initial conversation on the research process and secondly during the taped interviews, where the respondents reply was recorded and fully transcribed.

5.3.3 Choosing a sample for the research

The researcher gathered the sample using snowballing drawing on approaches adopted by Burgess, (1990) and Fletcher, (2010) and Snijders (1992) asking the initial participants who else they might know who may be suitable to participate in the research. Biernacki and Waldorf (1981) suggest that such a method of sampling whilst developed to be self-perpetuating is in fact problematic in that *"...the researcher must actively develop and control; the sample's initiation, progress and termination"*. The researcher would also contribute to a critical approach to this method in that using this method would appear to attract similar *"system of stratification"* (Gottman, 1994: 45) in that they represent similar businesses and similar social backgrounds. The researcher made every effort to create a sample of micro-businesses from no specific sector, ethnicity, gender, legal status or particular business.

The participants were first approached personally face to face or by telephone to enquire as to whether they would be interested in participating and then the researcher contacted them via e-mail attaching a letter providing them with a brief breakdown of the interview process (Appendix , p. xxvii). The participants had time to consider the

request after which a second email confirmed if the couple were interested. The majority of the couples preferred to be interviewed in their work place, which was often also their home. Three businesses were unable to participate with two businesses citing time constraints as the reason for not taking part. The researcher carried out two pilot studies offering rich data, and this led the researcher to decide to include one of the pilot interviews from the Climbing Company in the main body of the study.

5.3.4 Looking at how to perform an IPA interview

Conklin (2007: 276) suggests that when carrying out qualitative research that the researcher is on a quest to discover how the participants make sense of their world. He suggests that:

> *"A researcher should focus on what is to be discovered, leading intuitively to the best approach for gathering that data that will most successfully apprehend the phenomena at hand. And, as qualitative research tends toward discovery rather than replication or verification, the method to choose is that which provides the most complete picture of the phenomenon, yielding the greatest increase in understanding".*

The research approach applied an *"open conversation devise"* (Hamilton, 2013b: 59) "Can you tell me what made you decide to start a business together?" Smith *et al.,* (2009; 57) describe this as a *"conversation with a purpose"* instigated by a particular question. This provided the means to put the participants at their ease and in part ensure that the interview process felt collaborative. It was helpful to construct an interview schedule enabling the researcher to, loosely prepare questions appropriate to the study. This was a guide in the early stages and very quickly became a nominal guide if the interview faltered in some way.

5.4 Learning from the pilot interviews

I performed two pilot interviews to help to inform the design for the main study in the homes the two couples, where they based their businesses. This enabled me to modify the research design informed by the practical experience of conducting interviews with a couple. The interviews were between one and a half and two hours and were taped and fully transcribed. The interview would begin by asking the couple to say something about how they met and how they decided to go into business together. It was always very interesting at this tentative stage to see how each couple approached this question to this period of transition in their lives. A number of interesting factors arose from this stage of the research. Firstly, the couples were able to provide a rich and often interlinked seam of data and appeared to be unencumbered by the presence of their spouse. Secondly, the interviews revealed the importance of examining literature outside of the entrepreneurship and family business discipline. This would enable the researcher to gain a more in-depth understanding of the social and psychological structures that underpin the spousal characters, and thirdly, the researcher found it very useful to keep a research diary with detailed notes taken immediately after each interview illustrated in (Appendix, 3, p. xxxii). Here the transcript was colour coded into four different areas for interpretation:

Whilst it helped to have a detailed interview schedule, the richest seam of information would flow if the couples were able to tell their story with nominal interruption. This is in keeping with Kvale and Brinkman's (2009) stance that the qualitative interviewer should take on an approach of *"deliberate naiveté"* whereby they are *"open to new and unexpected phenomena, rather than having readymade categories and schemes of interpretation"*. The researcher observed how the couples were able to interweave

their stories together, dancing around their personal conventions of communication quickly rendering the researcher invisible, merely performing the role as the compass when they steered off course. This supports the experiences of Bjørnholt and Gunhild (2014: 9) who found that they took on the role as an observer as the *"partners conduct conversations amongst themselves"*.

5.4.1 Pilot interview one: Ron and Sarah, owners of the Bed and Breakfast Business

The first pilot interview was with a Bed and Breakfast micro-business established for over twenty years. Initially they had rented out a few rooms in their house through friends who owned a B&B and then when Ron could not find employment they invested in a renovation property to provide him with work and the family with future income. Throughout their time running a number of businesses' they had never negotiated any firm business plan or structure. They had recognised each other's particular strengths and for the most part worked to them. They had not made their business partnership legal, nor had they particularly agreed specifically who would perform what role. They had a fluid approach to both their working and home lives taking responsibility for home tasks in particular on an emerging need basis:

They cited three transitional points (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003; Fletcher, 2010) which instigated the motivation for Sarah to consider buying a larger B & B. The first was foot and mouth breaking out which directly affected their business, then Sarah's mother was diagnosed with an illness and finally the recession. Kets de Vries, Carlock, & Treacy (2007: 193) suggest that critical life events can motivate entrepreneurial action. It was clear from the initial interview that the researcher would

need to consider the literature concerned with socially embedded family processes that were part of the spousal dynamic as an important element to the main study.

This initial interview highlighted the importance of putting the respondents at their ease, and the couple often began by launching into process rather than their personal reflections. Approaching the interview in a way that put the participants at their ease by framing the opening question enabled the respondents to reflect on their copreneurial stories. It became clear that detailed listening offered opportunities to interpret the deeper meaning articulated in the interviews. The pilot interviews revealed that relational skills such as, sensitivity and listening are an important part of the development of the interview approach. Smith *et al.*, (2009: 66) state that:

> *"Research interviews must be viewed as interactions, and as partial in their scope. They provide us with a snapshot of a person's attempts to make sense of their experiences. We can improve the quality of theses snapshots by taking care to prepare them, and by managing the conditions with sensitivity".*

5.4.2 Jenny and Paul: The Climbing Company

The interview with Jenny and Paul highlighted how gender ideologies played an important role in how the couple managed the business and domestic in their home environment. It also highlighted the importance of a sound understanding of the ethical implications of interviewing a couple together and the need to safeguard both the researcher and participants (Gatrell, 2009). Bjørnholt and Farstad (2014) suggest that, interviewing the couple together can overcome issues of confidentiality between the spouses. This leads to the construction of *"a common story"* where conflict, *"family myths, taboos and secrets"* may form part of the rich seam of data produced

form the interviews. This couple provided a rich seam of data for interpretation developed further in the analysis Chapters 6-8.

5.5 Method of Analysis

The method of analysis adopted an approach developed by Smith *et al.,* (2009). The taped interviews were fully transcribed (Appendix 2: xxx). This Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) method (Fig.8, p.110) requires an idiographic approach, analysing every line and colour coding it to discover any phenomena that may be present in the conversation. Colour coding enabled exploration of the important areas for consideration when looking at the copreneurial experience for this study. The four areas explored were as follows:

Red = Discourse on the business

Green = Discourse on self in business and domestic

Blue = Discourse on relationship with others in business and domestic

Brown = Researchers observations and thoughts

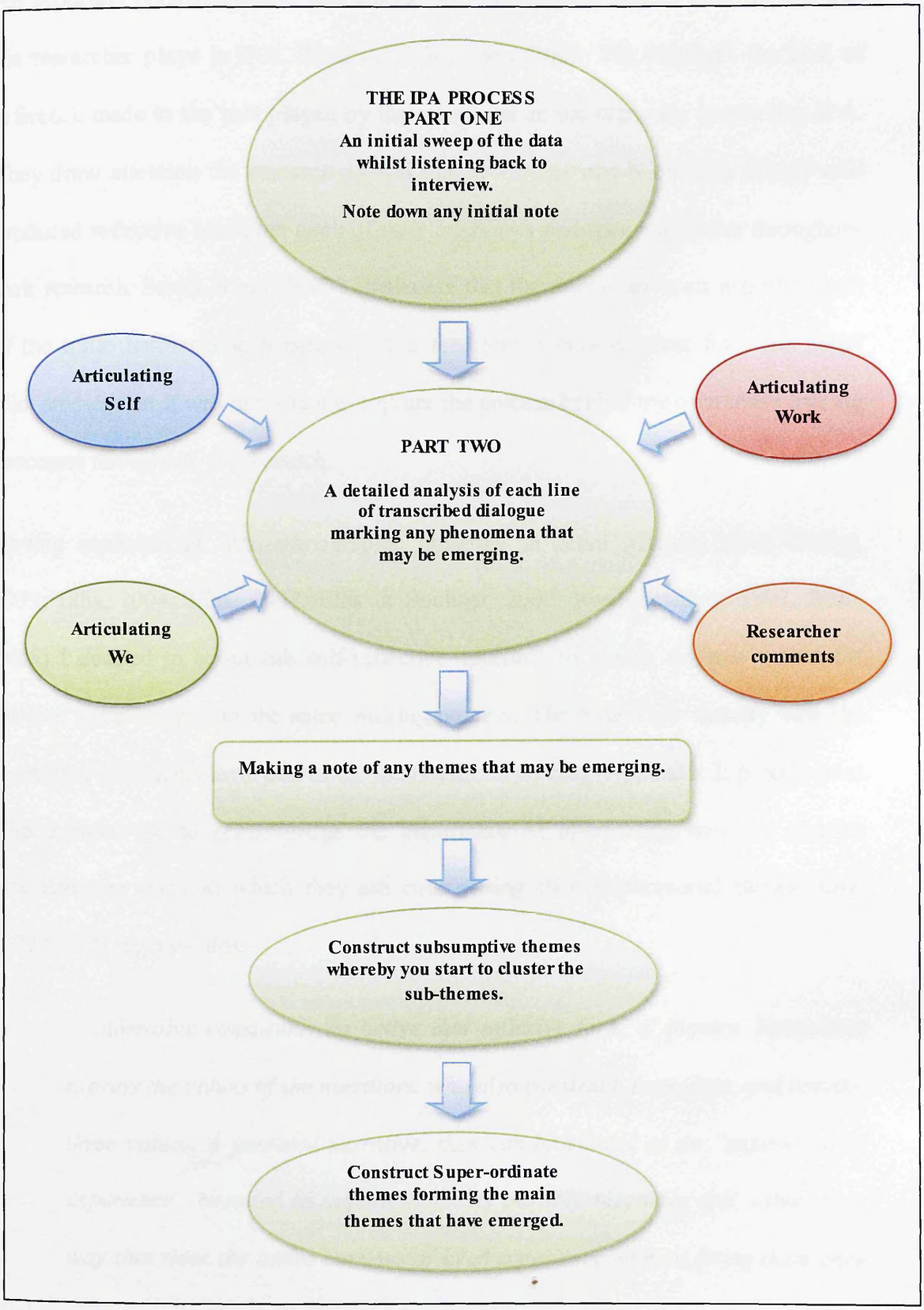
(See Appendix 2. P. xxix)

The colour coding enabled the researcher to see any themes that were emerging from the analysis. This is a time consuming method and therefore it was decided after analysis of the pilot interviews that this would be applied to the remaining transcripts until data saturation was reached (Brocki & Wearden, 2005: 94) to ensure that the researcher was able to identify any common meaning arising from the rich empirical data.

The researcher made a sweep of the pilot interview transcript whilst listening to the taped interview to capture any initial thoughts from the narratives. This then enabled

the researcher to identify any subsumptive themes gathered from clusters formed from the initial identification of emerging themes (Fig. 8, p.110). This enabled the researcher to identify the main or super-ordinate themes (Appendix 4) that formed the main body of the findings in Chapters 6-8. Jack and Anderson (2002: 473) suggest that such forms of detailed analysis allow us to gain insight into the world we are examining. This can provide an *"in depth understanding of the role of each respondent"*.

Figure 8: The interpretative phenomenological analysis process



5.6 Acknowledging the part the researcher plays in IPA

An important perspective that was emerging from the pilot studies was the role that the researcher plays in IPA. Brocki and Wearden (2005: 98) highlight the lack of reference made to the part played by the researcher in the literature concerning IPA. They draw attention the research carried out by Collins and Nicholson (2002) who produced reflective note after each of their interviews and then kept notes throughout their research. Smith *et al.,* (2009) emphasise that the researcher is an important part of the triple hermeneutic perspective and therefore it became clear from the initial pilot studies that it was important to capture the process behind my own sense making processes throughout the research.

Having explored the auto-ethnographic literature in detail (Chang, 2008; Coffey, 1999; Ellis, 2004; Ellis, 2007; Ellis & Bochner, 2002; Reed-Danahay, 1997, Roth, 2005) I decided to adopt this self-reflective approach to enable my role within the process to be integral to the sense making process. The transcripts identify how the researcher comments form part of the interpretation process (Appendix 2. p. xxix-xxx). This enabled me to acknowledge the importance of interpreting how the couples articulate the ways in which they are constructing their copreneurial stories. Ellis (2009: 212) suggests that:

> *"...narrative constitutes an active and reflexive form of inquiry. Narratives express the values of the narrators, who also construct, formulate, and remake these values. A personal narrative, then can be viewed as an "experience of experience" intended to inquire about its possible meanings and values in a way that rides the active currents of lived experience without fixing them once*

and for all. Understanding is not embedded in the experience as much as it is achieved through an ongoing and continuous experiencing of experience"

This approach enabled me to use narrative as a means to place *"self within a social context"* (Reed-Danahay, 1997: 9) as part of the creation of the copreneurial stories in this study. I kept a journal; producing ongoing reflections throughout the research process (see Appendix 3, p. xxxii). This approach became invaluable in enabling me to immerse myself in the processes of IPA.

This also highlighted the potential limitations of this approach when I brought my own gendered experiences of copreneurship into the interpretative process. In an attempt to limit the impact of this on the participant's narratives, I did not inform them of my own experiences until the interview had finished. This was difficult to achieve as I had approached some of the participants' at networking events where they may have heard part of my copreneurial story. This highlights the messiness of qualitative research where the intention is to gather insight from lived experience. Foddy (1993: 192) concludes that, *"we do impose either our own view of reality, or our guesses about our respondents' views of reality, upon our respondents"*. This study began as a personal motivation to understand how others articulate their personal experience of copreneurship.

5.7 Making sense of the complex data: Analysing the main study

The main study consisted of fourteen businesses that fitted the criteria consistent with the insight and modification made by the pilot interviews. Interviews were undertaken with the fourteen couples where possible and each interview lasted between one to two hours (see Tables 3-5, pp.116-118) for a summary of the businesses. The

participants are from no specific sector, ethnicity, gender, legal status or particular business.

The researcher carried out semi-structured interviews, Foddy (1993: 25) suggests that:

> *"...the researcher must start with a clear definition of the topic to be investigated. It also implies that the researcher has a clear understanding of the kind of information about the topic that will satisfy the theoretical or practical reasons for carrying out the research".*

It became clear that snowball sampling (Burgess, 1990) could be problematic when trying to construct a varied *"referral chain"* (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981: 155). The researcher found that some respondents recommended businesses with a similar discipline and background and a number of businesses were rejected on this basis. The study draws on a group of heterogeneous businesses that demonstrate *"the general characteristics of the population in question"* (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981: 155). The final sample of fourteen businesses represented a varied group of sectors from, the arts, service sector, retail and manufacturing providing a rich source of empirical material to draw on (Tables 3-5. pp.116-118).

The large amount of data gathered created moments of feeling overwhelmed by the magnitude of the task. Smith *et al.,* (2009: 100) suggest that when working with a larger number of cases it can be helpful to produce a larger visual table or graphic to help with the sense making process. I produced a number of diagrams to aid identification of any patterns that were emerging from the empirical material (see Appendices 4-8, p. xxxiii-vi). Appendix 4 (p. xxxiii), seen in greater detail on the disc provided, highlights how I captured all of the themes gathered relating to the three areas discussed earlier on page 109, coded red, blue or green. This enabled me to

identify the emerging patterns that created the super-ordinate themes. This approach created a space in which I could *"search for patterns and connections until one is examining all of the cases together"* Smith *et al.,* (2009: 106). This highlighted a number of areas of particular significance including ways in which the participants' articulated issues of gender role definition; family practices; spousal ideologies; and business structure. It highlighted the significance of understanding the relational approach to copreneurial business discussed in Chapter 3, and the importance of the

Appendix 5 (p. xxxiv) demonstrates how the initial mind map illustrated in Appendix 4 (p. xxxiii), helped to identify the subsumptive themes. This provided a means to bring together related themes such as how the couples met or decided to start a business together. This enabled identification of the main themes emerging from the ways in which the participants articulated the creation of their new copreneurial script. The analysis highlighted how the majority of the spouses described how they managed to juggle the business with their domestic responsibilities by relying on the relational competency of the female spouse. Jordan (2004: 20) suggests that this demonstrates the ability to put the relationship and *"good of the community"* at the centre of the creation of a relational organization.

Appendices 6-7 (pp. xxxv-xxxvi), illustrates how the themes emerging from the data enabled an in-depth exploration of the ways in which the participants' articulated their family system. This builds on Aldrich and Cliff (2003) who claim that, you cannot consider the business perspective of a family business without also including the family perspective. Smith-Acuña (2011) draws on systems theory to explore a way in which to understand the complex layers of couple and family relationships. Here she is using Lazlo's (1972) definition which describes a system as *"meaningful wholes that are maintained by the interaction of their parts".* Whilst working with a married

couple experiencing marital difficulties she describes how the marriage had become *"a character in the room"*(p.3). This provided an additional means of interpretation of the narratives illustrated by the diagrams developed during this stage of the analysis and can be explored in greater detail on the enclosed CD. It was during this stage of the interpretation that closer examination of the ways in which each participant articulated their gender role within the copreneurial dynamic. This illustrated how a multi-disciplinary approach provided a means to develop a more detailed understanding of the copreneurial experience.

The Pivotal Characters (Copreneurs)	Short history of the copreneurs	Role in Company
Eleanor and Sam **Skincare Company**	The couple ran two businesses prior to developing their own skincare business. Eleanor designed and developed the products to sell in their shop that they sold once the skin care products started to become popular in 2003. They went into businesses together to create a different lifestyle for each other, one that would enable them to spend more time together with less stress in their lives.as a couple. Eleanor is passionate about creating affordable, ethical products for their customers. They are ambitious to grow their company to a level that will enable them to achieve an affordable lifestyle. They run the business from a small retail premises which they hope to expand over the next two years.	Co-Directors
Sasha and Tony **Theatre Company**	Sasha and Tony first met on a large theatre project for the Millennium celebrations as colleagues. Sasha was a performer in the show and Tony was the production manager. Tony wanted to be more autonomous in his carrier and set out to start his own theatre company. Sasha wanted to move from performing to creating her own productions. They became an intimate partnership during the creation of the new business. The couple recently relocated to France where they have built and at-height rehearsal space. They currently have no children. They run the business from home.	Co-Directors
Janice and Walter **Craft Business**	Walter was determined to create his hobby and passion for model aeroplanes into a business enterprise. He was motivated following his involvement with a similar company that appeared to be making a good living out of running a model making business. Janice was motivated to join Walter by her own interest in crafts. The couple were recovering from bankruptcy and had no assets of their own prior to starting the business and relied on Janice's mother to fund the business using her credit card. They were also very busy bringing up a daughter and disabled son. The business is situated in a retail premises.	Joint ownership
Tammy and Edward **Special Educational Needs (S.E.N.)Training**	Edward started his business when he became frustrated at working for an employer. He felt that they were not helping practitioners to utilize the products they were selling for sensory rooms for disabled children. Tammy became involved with the business from the beginning as administrator, but did not become a named owner until a number of years later. This followed a distressing incident as a Speech therapist that led to Edward encouraging her to leave and join him in the business full time. She now performs a pivotal role in the company. They have two children and this made it quite difficult for Tammy to manage with the business when they were younger. They run the business from home.	Co-Owners

Table 3: The Pivotal Characters (1 of 3)

The Pivotal Characters (Copreneurs)	Short history of the copreneurs	Role in Company
Celia and David **Vineyard owners**	Celia and David moved out to France in 2003 when they discovered a Vineyard for sale and bought it. They had no prior experience or knowledge of wine production but both shared a passion for wine. They moved with their youngest daughter leaving their two sons in England to complete University. A year after moving to France it was decided that David would have to return to his old IT job in the UK to continue funding the Vineyard. He has continued to commute to London ever since leaving Celia to manage the majority of the business duties on her own. They run the business from home.	Co-directors
Deborah and Toby **Preserve Company**	Deborah and Toby developed their business with the support of their bank manager after an outbreak of foot and mouth affected the footfall to their coffee shop. They had been involved in business all of their lives, each being part of entrepreneurial families prior to getting married. A family rift with Toby's family had motivated them to join Deborah's family business bought from her parents. They have now moved the chutney business into a small factory where it is continuing to grow. They are not motivated by profit but the life the business can provide for the couple and their two daughters.	Co-directors
Nick and Gary **Executive Training**	Nick and Gary met on a theatre tour many years prior to setting up a business together. They are passionate about integrating their performance training into educational and business training. A series of very serious illnesses since the early 1990's has seriously affected their ability to develop the business in the way that they would have liked. They have had difficulties with finance and this has meant that they have lost their house and struggle to maintain the business and their current standard of living. They run the business from home.	Joint ownership
Alice and Mark **Brand Development**	Alice and Mark launched their business in the first year of their married lives after Alice left an unhappy work situation. Initially the business was able to manage large clients and this enabled the business to grow. The couple had to scale back their business when they decided to start a family and did not have the financial capability to pay for extensive childcare. They have now been running the business for over sixteen years and continue to struggle financially to manage the business and the home. It has affected their health and both admit to difficulties in sleeping at night. They run the business from home.	Co-Directors

Table 4: The Pivotal Characters (2 of 3)

The Pivotal Characters (Copreneurs)	Short history of the copreneurs	Role in Company
Lynda and Roger **Packaging Company**	Roger started the business after redundancy. He was encouraged by colleagues to start his own business and funded it using the money from the sale of their family home. The couple continue to live in rented accommodation maintaining that the business is their pension fund. Roger ran the business from home for the first five years, and then they were able to move into a small warehouse. Roger encouraged Lynda to join the company when she became increasingly unhappy working as a teacher in FE. One of their two daughters has recently joined the company.	Roger sole trader Lynda performing a key role in company but not a named partner.
Fern and Simon **Chemical Water Treatment (C.W.T) Company**	Fern was encouraged to start her own chemical water treatment company by friends after becoming increasingly frustrated with the working environment she was in. Simon used his redundancy money from the bank that he had worked in to fund Fern's project. They run the business to enable Fern to achieve her dream of running her own company but strive to maintain a good balance between the business and their private lives. They run the business from home.	Co-Directors
Verity and Chris **Car Maintenance**	Chris set up his Car Maintenance business after becoming increasingly frustrated with his job. Verity having left her own job once they were married joined Chris in the business. Chris maintains the practical side of the business and Verity manages the administration. They run the business from home.	Co-Directors
Pat and William The Dairy Farmers (duration 130 years)	William always worked on the family farm and took over aspects of the business once his father had died. Pat joined the business a number of years after their marriage with no prior experience. The couple have recently experienced a family rift after disagreement over the structure of the farm led to a legal battle with his brother. They run the business from home.	Partners
Jenny and Paul **Climbing Company**	Paul started his own climbing company to enable him to follow his passion for climbing and outdoor activities. Jenny joined the company after their marriage. It has been difficult for Jenny to play such an active part in the business since the birth of their three children. They run the business from home.	Joint Owners
Freya and Martin **Educational Psychologists**	Martin and Freya started their business after Martin became redundant. Martin takes the lead in the company with Freya managing her role alongside childcare for their children and her other paid work.	Co-Directors

Table 5: The Pivotal Characters (3 of 3)

5.7.1 The couple interview in practice

The semi-structured interviews were carried out in the participant's place of work that was usually based at their home. The interview would begin with an open question asking the couple to say something about how they met and how they decided to go into business together. It was very interesting at this tentative stage to see how each couple approached this question and most of the couples sought permission to be the first one to speak, and in the majority of the interview's the man would start. This highlighted some interesting issues around gender, power and discourse. Talbot (2010: 118) highlights the importance of defining what we mean by discourse which in this instance is *language as action, or as interaction in specific social situations".* Talbot draws on the work of Foucault and critical discourse analysis to highlight a poststructuralist approach to discourse and highlights his perspective on power and discourse:

> *"[...] to account for the fact that [sex] is spoken about, to discover who does the speaking, the positions and viewpoints from which they speak, the institutions which prompt people speak about it and which store and distribute things that are said. What is at issue, briefly, is the over-all 'discursive fact' the way in which sex is 'put into discourse"* (Foucault (in Faubion. ed., 1994) cited in Talbot, 2010: 120).

This research has drawn attention to the way in which the couples were constructing their copreneurial characters within the ideological conventions of gender and intimacy. Mills and Mullany (2011) draw attention to the feminist consensus that describes power as *"a 'net' or 'web'* (Bird & Brush, 2002); they go on to suggest that:

> *"There is now a focus upon the local management of power relations, the way that individuals negotiate with the status which they and others have been allotted or which they have managed to achieve, and which within particular contexts they can contest or affirm, through language and through their behaviour"* (Mills & Mullany, 2011: 57).

The research drew on a diverse group of participants and found that the issue of power and voice was an issue for the couples regardless of their sex. The researcher was able to interview a same sex partnership where once again they negotiated who should speak first. The couples were performing their gender roles and the researcher became part of the ballet choreographing the characters articulated by the copreneurs. Goffman (1990) suggests that people put on a *"social front"* for each social space that they inhabit and he highlights the work of Park (1950) who states that:

> *"It is probably no mere historical accident that the word person, in its first meaning, is a mask. It is rather recognition of the fact that everyone is always and everywhere, more or less consciously, playing a role...It is in these roles that we know each other; it is in these roles that we know ourselves"* (Park cited in Goffman, 1990: 30).

This presented the researcher with an interesting perspective from which to examine the rewriting of the intimate characters to become copreneurs. It was also interesting to note that in creating a character participating in the interview process that some of the women participants unable to do the interview with their husband articulated how they found it difficult to divulge their story when their partner was not there. This supports the findings of Hamilton (2005: 149) that suggest that interviewing the

couple together led to a *"less constrained"* performance. It also poses the question of legitimacy and whose voice is privileged in the copreneurial story.

5.8 Positioning the research within the disciplines of family business and entrepreneurship literature

The previous section explored the idiographic process of carrying out IPA within a family business context. The next section will highlight how the researcher explored the family business and entrepreneurship literature and literature outside of the discipline to gain a more nuanced understanding of the copreneurial dynamic. This section will highlight the research journey in terms of the extant literature and how this research contributes to the current understanding of the copreneurial experience.

5.8.1 Creating a performance: Exploring Goffman's perspective

The initial stages of the research during the pilot interviews highlighted a number of benefits to conducting a qualitative study using IPA (Smith *et al.,* 2009). This is discussed at length in section 5.4. This idiographic approach to gathering and analysing the empirical material enabled the researcher to explore the copreneurial stories in the business and the domestic domains. This enabled the researcher to explore how the couples were creating their new identities and how the research approach might enable the researcher to engage with the literature.

IPA offered the researcher a detailed structure for analysis helping to identify the phenomena that arose from the narratives and any key themes that were common to the corpus under investigation. The researcher also adopted a feminist poststructuralist stance which:

> "[…] *draws upon the post-structuralist*

> *principles of complexity, plurality, ambiguity, connection, recognition, diversity, textual playfulness functionality and transformation".*
>
> (Harrington *et al.,* ed., 2008: 245).

This approach highlighted key themes articulated by the copreneurs regarding their reconstruction of their intimate spousal characters into more public copreneurial characters.

The researcher was aware of the downside to using IPA and found that the amount of data gathered highlighted the importance of a rigorous approach to analysis. Collins and Nicholson, (2002) cited in Brock & Wearden, 2006: 100) express their concerns over the "*diluting of the respondents text and the disaggregation and unitization of the data*" Brock and Wearden (2006: 100) highlight that:

> *"Collins and Nicholson's (2002) suggestion that IPA is a useful approach to guide analysis of the data but suggest that more attention is paid to the sequential nature of the individual account".*

However Brock and Wearden (2006) support the position of Smith *et al.,* (2002) and this researcher would concur that the "*idiography does not eschew generalizations, but rather prescribes a different way of establishing those generalizations (Harré, 1979* cited in Smith *et al.,* 2009). IPA provides a way of interpreting the details of the individual stories and collating the findings to identify the broader themes. This is in keeping with the double hermeneutic discussed in Table 2, p.93.

5.8.2 Exploring the embeddedness of family practices in the copreneurial business

The final area that was highlighted in the analysis for consideration was the role that family structures and spousal role in the formation of the copreneurial characters. This researcher drew on the work of Aldrich and Cliff (2003) as the starting point for this exploration and found that this study could contribute by adding a gender perspective to create a more balanced consideration of the family embeddedness question. The researcher entered into the interviews without specifically discussing gender roles and yet throughout the analysis it became clear that many of the participants were articulating stereotypical performances within their copreneurial dynamic. This is touched upon in the work of Marshack (1994), and McAdam and Marlow (2013), and this study develops this further by identifying the relational competencies of the women as a major factor in the maintenance of a copreneurial micro-business beyond the start-up phase.

5.9 Concluding comments

This chapter set out to explain the theoretical and philosophical starting point for this research. It has used IPA (Smith *et al.,* 2009) to create the methodological structure and ontological and epistemological considerations for the main body of the study. The researcher drew on Goffman (1990) to create the dramaturgical perspective to exploring issues of character and gender role in a copreneurial micro-business. A phenomenological approach to the interviews produced empirical data that provided a number of interesting themes for consideration. The work of Egri (1960) creates a starting point for the structure to present the findings explored further in the Chapters (6, 7 and 8). Literature outside entrepreneurship and family business disciplines

formed a substantial part of the early exploration of the empirical material and the data has added a more nuanced understanding of the experience of rewriting an intimate character to become a copreneurial character.

5.10 Summary of the analysis chapters

This chapter set out to explain the ontological and epistemological starting point for the research and the methodological approach to the research design and consequently the method of gathering the data. A dramaturgical perspective provides an approach to explore the narratives of fourteen copreneurial micro-businesses with particular emphasis on spousal gender role and family embeddedness in their day-to-day managing of the business and domestic domains.

In Chapter 6 the analysis is broken down into three sections. The first will introduce the concept of premise or reason for choosing to go into business with an intimate other and will draw on the structure created by Egri (1960) and a theoretical framework developed by Goffman (1990).

The second section will explore Goffman's proposition that people create different roles according to their audience and environment and create a social front themselves, which in this case is the role as an entrepreneur. However, this section will establish that the copreneurs are attempting to restructure the normative view of this front to create a new face of entrepreneurship embedded in intimacy and relationship.

Part three, will establish how the couples articulate their start up ideologies or goals and how closely they are each aligned to the others aspirations for their future lives.

Chapter 7 will introduce the reader to the pivotal or leading characters. It will analyse the narratives of the couples to enable the researcher to explore issues of gender role and power. Drawing on a dramaturgical approach it explores the relational dimensions articulated in the copreneurial narratives to understand the pivotal role that many of the women play. It will introduce the leading, pivotal players in various scenes that represent the role they have articulated in their interviews.

Chapter 8 will bring all of the stories together to create the copreneurial scripts that highlight the part that gender dimensions and family embeddedness plays in the creation and maintenance of their new copreneurial script. It will highlight the key findings from the narratives from a dramaturgical perspective drawing attention to the ideological dilemma facing the copreneurs. This draws attention to the importance of understanding the homogenized world of a copreneurial micro-business.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Interpreting the narratives to find the copreneurial premise

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Constructing the script and rewriting the spousal characters

6.3 Creating a different entrepreneurial script to challenge the current hegemonic perspectives

6.4 Identifying the four main themes that have emerged from examining the copreneurial premise

6.5 From an idealized script to the realities of an everyday performance

6.6 Concluding comments

Chapter 6: Interpreting the narratives to find the copreneurial premise for copreneurship

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of the next chapter is to establish the power of interpretative phenomenology to draw out the stories and characters articulated in life experiences, the everyday stories, those anecdotal accounts of the copreneurs, and give them voice. In so doing this researcher will interpret the stories of the spouses through analysis of their narratives, and in particular the female voice which is so often marginalised to the private realm of family and home, presented through their own interpretation of the copreneurial experience. This direction of analysis builds on the work of Goffman (1990) who explores the performative nature through a dramaturgical perspective, of human existence, and Egri (1960) who provides us with a literary structure on which to construct the played out drama of the lives of the copreneurs. This explores a world in which individuals exist in relation to others in a socially constructed environment where each has a part to play.

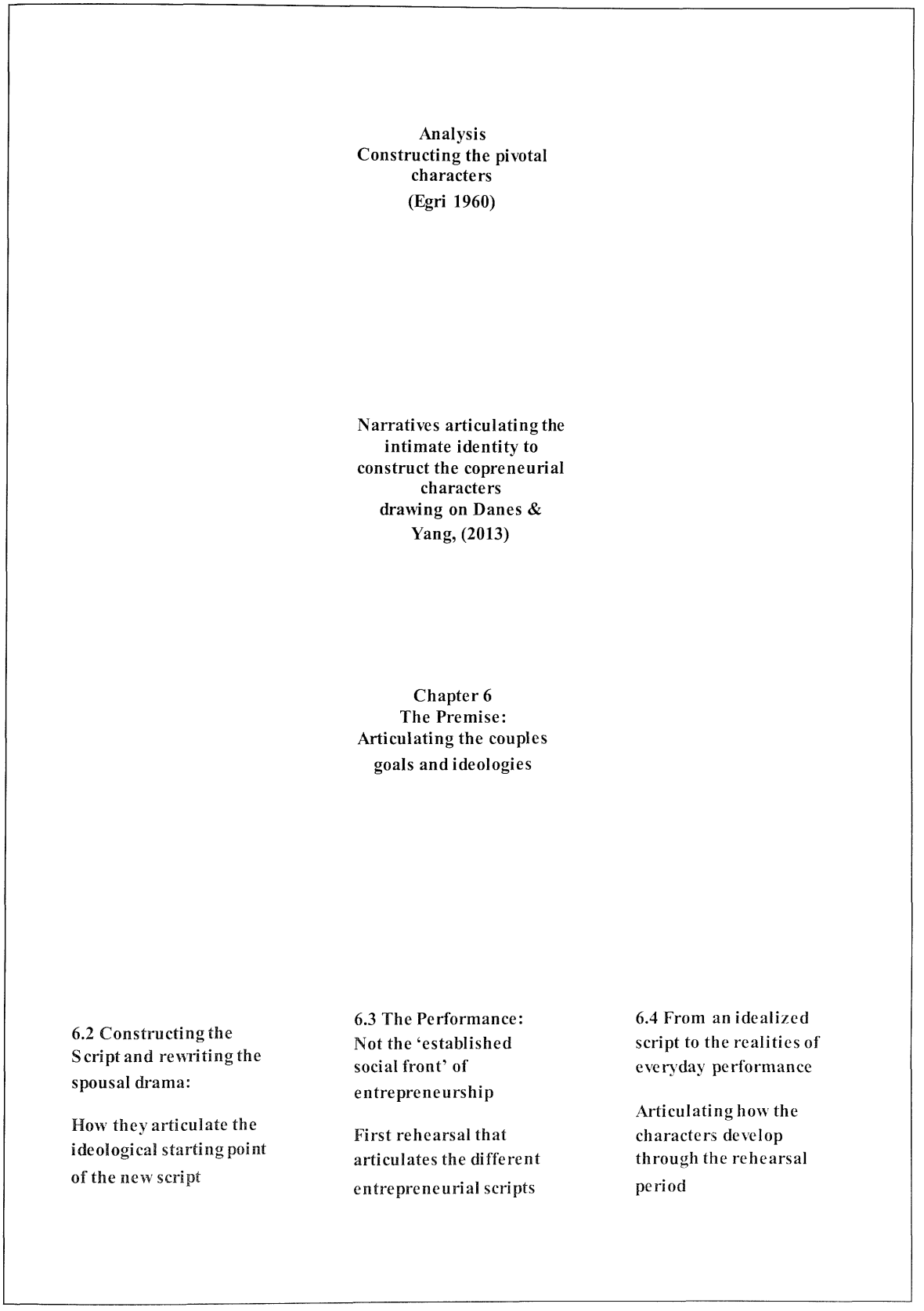
The analysis is presented in three parts (see Fig 9, p.129) that will illustrate, through interpretation of the narratives, an understanding of the couple's stories and character formation as outlined in the previous chapter. It will also draw together the concept of performance (Goffman, 1990) and *the creative interpretation of human motives* (Egri, 1960), and the notion that we perform gender. Butler (1990: XV) suggests that:

> "*In the first instance, then, the performativity of gender revolves around this metalepsis, the way in which the anticipation of a gender essence produces that which it posits as outside itself. Secondly, performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its*

naturalization in the context of the body, understood in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration".

This chapter will introduce the conceptual framework that will enable the researcher to examine how the couples articulate the creation of their new copreneurial identities. It will consider what part gender identity and relational practice plays in this reconstruction paying particular attention to the way in which they articulate their gender role in the creation of their new copreneurial characters.

Figure 9: Constructing the pivotal characters



The first section (6.2), will introduce the researchers notion of the *"premise"* as the starting point for the couple's new copreneurial characters, drawing heavily on the work of Egri (1960: 1), thesis will build on the structure of dramatic writing. This in turn has been framed by the theoretical approach of Goffman (1990) adopting a theatrical metaphor (p.32) where daily life is viewed as the stage on which we perform. Each couple articulates through their narratives the motivation or premise for their choice to rewrite their intimate life as a couple who own and run a business together. Egri argues that without a premise, a character cannot inhabit a story or plot. The building blocks must follow in sequence to allow the richness of the story to enfold. It will introduce four meta-premises that represent the super-ordinate themes identified by the use of IPA in the narrative analysis process.

The second section (6.3) will develop Goffman's idea that individuals create each performance using an established social front discussed in Chapter 4. He suggests that we are drawn to the *abstract similarities* and not the differences based on our, *"past experience"* and *"stereotypical thinking"* (Goffman, 1990: 36). That is to say, we create our performance according to our community the social environment. This thesis challenges the tendency for the entrepreneurial and family business discourse to establish such a social front when articulating what entrepreneurship is, and who inhabits the metaphorical costume. Section (6.3) will develop the argument that entrepreneurship is not just the property of the heroic individual but part of something more relationally complex.

The final section (6.4), will explore how the characters attempt to perform the reality of a blended life. It will use the theatrical metaphor to examine how the couples have managed to achieve their copreneurial goals, and how closely this reflects the idealised script that they wrote.

6.2 Constructing the script and rewriting the spousal characters

This analysis draws on Goffman's (1990) perspective as discussed in Chapter 5 that all individuals are performers in their day-to-day lives. This everyday performance blends with both verbal and physical interaction determining what part each character might play in the ensuing drama. He observes that the motives that drive this character forward can be affected and changed when they suffer a 'great crisis' (p.166) or desire to improve their social position (p.45). Characters narrate an idealised version of their lives, which may or may not reflect the reality of their story. (p.44). For the copreneurs in this study it appears that they embarked on a journey to write a new version of their lives born out of intimacy, and the desire to break away from the traditional notion of what paid work might look like.

6.2.1 Producing a new script in which they perform a new chapter of their lives as copreneurs

This study will aim to develop, through interpretation of the phenomena derived from interpretative phenomenological analysis of the narratives, an understanding of the copreneurial drama in which the characters perform. The copreneurial framework starts with the individual premise of each couple. The stories painted a rich and diverse picture of both the shared and individual goals of each couple. They articulate how they have rewritten their future based on a decision to reconstruct their lives as an intimately linked couple involved in business together (see Table. 6, p.133).

For the fourteen couples participating in this study the narrative analysis identified various premise as a basis for the decision to recreate their spousal identities as copreneurs. They began by telling a tale of the idealised and highly romantic version of what copreneurial life could offer them filled with a good balance between work

and the personal. The purpose of the narrative analysis is to draw out an understanding of their initial interpretation of what their newly formed identities could offer them as an intimate couple participating in business together. (Table 6, p.133) illustrates how diverse and complex the couple decisions/motivations have been and the following section will aim to shine a light on the complexities of some of those narrative accounts.

Name	Premise for being a copreneur	Copreneurial business structure
Deborah and Toby Preserve Company	'Innovate or die': Failure of café caused by outbreak of foot and mouth inspired couple to develop their own preserve business.	Joint venture
Amanda and James (C.W.T.) Company	Amanda wanted to be her own boss	Amanda entrepreneur James supportive spouse
Verity and Chris Car Maintenance	Chris wanted to make passion for specialist cars into a business.	Chris entrepreneur Verity supportive spouse
Sasha and Tony Theatre Company	Sasha wanted to follow her own artistic path Tony wanted to be his own boss	Joint venture
Lynda and Roger Packaging Company	Roger made redundant offered chance to set up own business	Roger entrepreneur Lynda supportive spouse
Celia and David The Vineyard	Couple had shared passion for wine	Joint venture
Eleanor and Sam Skin Care Company	Couple wanted to spend more time together	Joint venture
Janice and Walter Craft Business	Walter wanted to make his hobby a business Janice wanted to prove to her mother that she could succeed at something	Joint venture
Tammy and Edward (S.E.N.) Training	Edward wanted to be own boss	Edward entrepreneur Tammy supportive spouse
Gary and Nick Executive training	Couple wanted to use their acting and directing skills in educational training	Joint venture
Freya and Martin Educational Psychologists	Martin wanted to develop his passion for educational psychology into a business	Martin entrepreneur Freya supportive spouse
Pat and Will Dairy Farmers	Will wanted to join the family business	Will entrepreneur Pat supportive spouse
Alice and Mark Brand Development	Mark wanted to be own boss Alice wanted to escape unhappy working experiences	Joint venture
Jenny and Paul Climbing Company	Paul started the company and Jenny joined him once they were married	Paul entrepreneur and Jenny the supportive spouse

Table 6: Articulating the reason for becoming a copreneurial business

6.2.2 Narrating the birth of copreneurial life

This section of the narrative analysis, will explore the idealised perspective that the couples articulated through their narratives. It identifies the part that critical incidents and personal drive for improvement play in the construction and performance of these newly formed roles (Kets de Vries, 2006; 2008; 2009; Kets de Vries, Carlock & Florent-Treacy, 2007). It would suggest that such behaviours are embedded in a desire to maintain the socially constructed and socially typical norms of marital and family life alongside the social and economic motivations. The couples attempt to create new characters better suited to the new script that they are co-authoring, whilst holding on to their embedded and traditionally gendered selves.

6.2.3 Creating new scripts out of the copreneurial stories

This section analyses the stories in terms of the initial premise for recreating the copreneurial characters. As would be expected of such diverse businesses the reasons do vary; however what does become clear on examination of the individual and couple goals articulated in this study is that the decisions are based on a combination of masculine and feminine dimensions (Bird & Brush, 2002) discussed in detail in Chapter 8. That is, the couples described both a need for greater achievement of relational goals such as sharing a project together, and the desire for autonomy. None of the couples cited an economic incentive to rewrite their spousal script, which contributes empirically to our understanding of how intimately linked partners are motivated to start a business of their own.

6.2.4 Building a 'Passion' into a business

In writing a new script around their copreneurial lives, analysis of the narratives highlighted the propensity for some of the couples to follow their hearts when rewriting their stories. This highlights how the participants articulate their drive to develop a passion, or hobby into a viable business. Such a tenuous motivation for new venture creation highlights the importance of gaining an understanding of business processes prior to start-up.

Danes and Jang (2013: 56) highlight the importance of spousal *"venture related communication"* particularly during new venture creation. The analysis of the narratives indicates how the couples articulate the lack of such communication, particularly prior to start-up. These findings indicate that very little thought or discussion takes place prior to business start-up. The couples are weaving a new reality based on an emotional fantasy with varying degrees of goal achievement. This is an important insight building on the work of (Kotlar and De Massis, 2013) highlight the importance of joint goal setting in family businesses.

When Celia and David discovered a Vineyard for sale on a family holiday in 2003, they were at a stage in their lives where they were ready to make a radical change, and having both worked in IT successfully for many years they were now in a financial position to take on their own project. Neither had any experience or knowledge of owning or running a Vineyard and carried out no research prior to the purchase. Their decision based on a romantic idyll that having their own business project would provide them with a better quality of life for each other and their family. They envisaged a life that would enable them to spend more time with each other doing something that they loved, achieving a new and elevated status in life (Goffman,

1990: 45) constructed on an idealised version of themselves based on a lifelong passion for wine. Celia acknowledges that this was not the way to create a new life with your intimate other:

> **Celia:** "Actually it's interesting 'cause I don't really, I didn't really look at it as a business at the time… 'cause it's more like a passion really, of course it's turned out to be a business, and I hadn't really realised how hard it would be as a business. But that's different from something you've always wanted to do really, so it's more of a passion that made us to do it, so we've kind of bought our dream rather than a business. I don't know if that's a different perspective to some things that other people do but, that's not always the greatest thing to do because, buying something from a passion point of view is not err, doesn't mean what you, you may not have the right business head to then back up all that, which is probably what lots of people say about it…I don't know [laughing] anyway that's basically the bottom line".

Goffman (1990) highlights the importance of understanding the construction of a character capable of producing a socially acceptable performance fit for the scene the character has constructed or inhabits. He talks of constructing *"sign equipment"* (p.45) on which construct a social status such as, the trappings of wealth or class.

Celia's story paints a picture of two newly created characters rewriting their lives as socially mobile landowners. They are creating the trappings of their newly formed characters driven by their own personal fantasy to own a Vineyard. They have obtained the sign equipment on which they can paint their new upwardly mobile lives (Goffman, 1990: 45). Celia has not constructed a narrative of sound business planning but one of intimacy and fantasy based around their emotional desire to follow a dream.

We find a similar situation with Janice and Walter from the Craft Business who have created their script based on their divergent goals. Redundancy and bankruptcy motivated Walter to turn his passion for model airplanes into developing a model aircraft business with his wife Janice:

> **Walter:** "But then I used to work for a company that was solely electric flight and then we were discussing that why not try it ourselves, so we did".

Janice explains how she took the lead with the company:

> **Janice:** Must have been O-nine then. But my Mum funded us so we could start sort of on -line. So we bought sort of like a small amount of stuff didn't we, but then the on-line just wasn't going anywhere, and then we had been told about the enterprise arcade which was a scheme that the council were running which was a six months free rent and rates, which like I thought would be good to go for it was gonna be good for the business and you two basically followed me because I had applied for it and then we went for an interview and got accepted didn't we and that's where it sort of grew from that really the enterprise arcade, didn't it really?
>
> **Walter:** Mm.

The couple articulate how they have no clear direction of travel for the business. They both explain how they made no plan prior to start-up:

> **Angela:** "And did you, when you started the business did you kind of, sit down and decide what each was going do or what your role was going be ?
> [Janice laughs]

Together: "No".

Walter: "Nothing".

Janice: "No never".

The couple articulate how they had no clear plan and tried to develop the business based on Walters hobby but were unable to attract enough customers to keep the business going. They demonstrate through their narrative how the power dynamic changed over time and Janice achieved greater influence over the direction that the business would take:

> **Janice:** "But we'd always chosen the name [Business Name] because I knew one day I wanted to expand anyway to include the arts and crafts side which was my side that I enjoyed, so we always knew that we were gonna expand but I don't know that we'd expected that we were gonna have to expand so quickly when we'd gone into retail because electric flight is just not. There's not enough people wanting it so that's why we did have to expand quite quickly".

This contributes to the current perspective on copreneurial business by highlighting a juxtaposition of the entrepreneurial discourse in favour of the female entrepreneur. The extant literature continues to position the male as performing the role of entrepreneurial lead in copreneurial discourse even in female lead copreneurial businesses. Janice and Walter's narrative represents the darker side of copreneurial business. Unable to raise funds for themselves, the couple relied on Janice's mother to fund their venture, using credit cards, enabling the couple to draw on both her economic and family capital (Chang *et al.,* 2009; Rodriguez *et al.,* 2009) to develop their business. The couple describe how a lack of role definition or business

knowledge had a detrimental effect on them both financially and personally. The premise for copreneurship is contradictory for Janice and Walter who cite very different motivations for creating a new business. They articulate their drive to create the illusion of success to their audience and they have established their business drawing on family resources by allowing Janice's mother to fund their business using her credit card. They describe how they have sacrificed a great deal emotionally and financially to maintain their performance as successful business owners. Janice maintains that it has always been her dream to own her own business, but acknowledges that the reality has not delivered her dream:

> **Janice:** "I still think that a lot of people do think cause you run your own business you're loaded but you're not you know, 'cause I've had so many people go ah, you run your own business you should have loads of money coming in, but you go no I don't. It's just that I probably had that bit of a dream that you know running your own business you, you should become a millionaire overnight…but it's not as easy as that, it takes a lot of hard work and determination really".

Janice describes a world in which the other actors in the copreneurial story have created an entrepreneurial ideology. She describes an unrealistic expectation that every business owner is wealthy and successful, and articulates how she bought into this dream but highlights how the reality is very different to the fantasy. What appears to be emerging from interpreting the narratives is an articulation of their passion for their separate goals. It also shows how they describe the lack of ability to separate emotion, embedded in an ideological dream, from business. The analysis shows that this has a fundamental effect on their ability to see the businesses as anything other than an extension of a personal and emotional desire to make a dream into a business.

The couples entered into the business ventures with very little planning or knowledge of what is involved. Danes and Jang (2013) suggest that, *"If a couple do not communicate effectively, it hinders identity verifications, and thus, identity development"*. They suggest that this process is important to the development of the copreneurial character. In writing their new script the couples appear to have constructed a complex life for themselves based on their idealised vision of an entrepreneurial life. Their inability to draw on supporting actors or social networks to build their social and family capital at the important start-up phase undermines their ability to achieve their start-up goals.

The couples motivated by passion construct their copreneurial world around established beliefs based on the intimacy of the marital and parental relationships, offering new insight into this growing area of study. It highlights the lack of planning prior to business start-up leaving the intimate partners to play an ambiguous role in the businesses in the early stages. They have become copreneurial characters as an extension of their existing relational and emotional norms, basing their lack of planning on, a faith in their existing roles as intimate partners with established avenues of trust, and gender ideologies. They are performing their new business lives as they have performed their marital lives embedded in a system that does not allow for structures needed to create their new copreneurial script. Castrogiovanni (1996: 803) suggest that it is preferable to make a plan prior to new venture creation because it *"facilitates business survival"*.

6.2.5 Critical life events as the catalyst to constructing a copreneurial character

A number of the couples identified a difficult life event that played a part in influencing them to start a business together. These findings link to and build upon the

work of Aldrich and Cliff (2003) who have identified what part *"process"* plays in into a business venture, *"emphasizing transitions into and out of difficult life events"* (p.579).

Four of the couples found themselves driven to make a decision to go self-employed based on such critical external incidents. In the case of the Packaging Company, redundancy led to the drive to develop a new business. Roger articulates how he found it a struggle to get back into the job market and started his own business encouraged by colleagues. He describes how he anchors his new copreneurial character in his ability to draw on his close-knit social resources. His established relationship with a small group of experienced colleagues and his developing new script with Lynda gave him the confidence to consider starting his own business:

> **Roger:** "...think going out on job interviews after all that period of time was quite a struggle, err, one of my old customers from Croydon said if I sold anything his warehouse we could split the profit ...so I started selling stuff that he had in his warehouse to various people... working from the front room of my house and this seemed to start being quite successful... didn't it?... we started selling quite a bit...".

Lynda articulates how she was able to offer whole hearted commitment to Roger during start-up supporting Van Auken and Werbel's (2006:49) proposition that spousal support is important. The couple were able the share a common goal embedded in the desire to enable Roger to circumvent his difficulties in finding employment.

For the Preserve Company, they describe how their previous business failure and then an outbreak of foot and mouth motivated them to find a means to maintain their

working partnership. They were determined to continue with their copreneurial script through innovation of new ideas, placing connection with their intimate other at the centre of their business goals:

> **Deborah:** "...so then in 2001 when the foot and mouth epidemic hit all of a sudden we had no trade in the café. We were sort of facing the situation we had been in years before where we couldn't meet our bills, and err thought we were heading down the same road again".

Deborah refers to the couple identity throughout the interview adopting the plural "we" in the context of both the professional and personal decisions that the couple have made throughout the construction of their copreneurial life. She describes how family values remain at the heart of their ideology developing *"strong ties"* (Greve & Salaff, 2003) as part of a family business throughout their married lives. Within a week of being married Deborah describes how she joined Mark's family in their pub which proved to be a difficult learning curve:

> **Deborah:** "...so I came straight from, back home after our honeymoon straight into a new life and err I just had to get on with".

Deborah articulates how she had always been part of an entrepreneurial family and was therefore well suited to becoming part of her new husband's family business. Initially she suggests that this was not without a little trepidation over how she might fit into this new life. These concerns diminished quickly once she joined the business:

> **Deborah:** "...I'd been so busy that a hadn't given it much thought and I can remember worrying before the wedding you know well what happens if you know I don't like been married, or we don't get on or I don't like working in

that environment an things and all of a sudden a year had gone by".

Deborah explains how the family members invested their time and money into the business adopting an informal style of management based on relational trust (Zahra, Yavuz & Ucbasaran, 2006). The narrative highlights how a lack of role definition and ongoing power struggles between the siblings served to undermine the couple's position within the business, and Deborah suggests that this ultimately led to their decision to walk away at great financial and personal cost. Deborah describes how the decision severing family ties continues to cause great personal sadness for the couple:

> **Deborah:** "...so it did start to make things difficult and after about three, well it's probably four years or so we made the break, and we left the business not altogether amicably, in fact he's not spoken to his sister since and that's well it it's over twenty years ago and that is probably the biggest shame of it really because it didn't need to, got to that point, and I will always regret that".

Deborah explains how for the couple, being part of two entrepreneurial families throughout their formative years maintained their belief that they both preferred to develop their own businesses rather than work for somebody else. Their copreneurial characters have been forged in embedded family practices throughout their formative years. This develops further in Chapter 8. Deborah recounts their lives in terms of their relationship with both the family and the various businesses that led them to the lives they are now living as copreneurs.

Similarly, when Martin from the Educational Psychologists experienced redundancy, this critical life event was the impetus that he needed to rewrite his life to become part of a copreneurial business with his wife Freya:

> **Martin:** "...and so I suddenly kind of had this idea, I was like right err actually I'm not really a case worker, I do like it, but I'm not like other colleagues that just have an absolute passion for it, I prefer working with adults. So part of my big thing about jumping out of that job into setting up a business was that we were consultancy working in business…"

They describe themselves in terms of their relational and professional compatibility:

> **Martin:** "...we've mutually kind of covered each other's blind spots in some ways…".
>
> **Freya:** "… the stuff we've got really complements each other…".

The narrative reflects their construction of an idealised representation of a couple working in harmony with each other, equally driven and represented in the business. They are building a copreneurial understanding of what their newly constructed lives will require as a couple who aim to blend their professional and family lives.

Lynda and Roger from the Packaging Company recount a similar sentiment when they discuss their decision for Lynda to leave her career in teaching to join the company. Their children were now older and more independent and Lynda was growing increasingly dissatisfied with the changing responsibilities of her job:

> **Lynda:** "And you were away a fair amount …I suppose it was that work life balance that had gone askew, I was working until six, seven o'clock at night, well over what I should be doing, and then working on the company finances. So it became an impossible balance".

This demonstrates the widely understood nature of family business, which draws on

the family, spousal, economic and social capital resources of its members to maintain the business (Danes, Haynes & Amarapurkar, 2009; Chang *et al.,* 2009; Rodriguez *et al.,* 2009). Lynda struggles to maintain her multifaceted life and, encouraged by Roger, joins his company.

The importance of the marital identity is highlighted by the narrative of the couple in the Packaging Company who establish that their intimate connection through marriage is the basis for their business relationship. They explain how Lynda plays a key role in the company and yet she is not a named partner contractually:

> **Lynda:** "We I hope we play an equal part, I know we have a share in the company I don't, I don't own the company it's wholly down to Roger but let me just, but we share it".
>
> **Roger:** "But the reality is, what's mine is yours anyway so it doesn't really matter it's my name on the top but essentially it's yours anyway".
>
> **Lynda:** "But that's the concept, that if the basis of it you know, what is yours is mine, what is mine is yours, we've always really been like that haven't we"?
>
> **Roger:** "That sort of mentality if I won £10.000 on the lottery I'd immediately say well there's £5,000 of hers and £5,000 of mine".

The couple create their copreneurial characters around the intimacy of their marital connection to each other. They continue to perform within their gender ideologies (Blaisure & Allen, 1995; McAdam & Marlow, 2013) which creates a stereotypical script supporting the current premise in the extant literature of heroic male and supportive female spouse (Marshack, 1994; Hamilton, 2006). For Lynda, she narrates her complete trust for her husband's intentions regarding their reconstructed

relationship. They perform stereotypical gender roles maintained throughout their married lives, even though Lynda has continued a career throughout.

6.2.6 Striving for autonomy: Creating a new stage on which to perform a copreneurial character

A desire to construct new characters based on a need for independence (Birley & Westhead, 1994) is articulated in the narratives. A number of the participants were no longer happy to perform their role as employees and articulated a desire to be their own boss and achieve autonomy (Larty, 2007). The reasons given in the narratives range from a frustration at having to conform to values different to their own, to an emotional motivation to break free from an oppressive environment.

For a number of the businesses the women describe how they have been able to perform a more equitable position as an entrepreneur in contrast to their previous experiences, although this is not reflected in the domestic domain (McAdam & Marlow, 2013). This is explored in more detail in Chapter 7. Critical incidents and a desire to rewrite the script in which the couples perform their lives, is articulated as a driver for creating a new copreneurial script.

The Skin Care Company are motivated by 'love' and the desire to spend more time together. Sam spoke of the relationship being at the heart of their shared goals:

> **Sam:** "...and frankly we really don't mind working together, sounds a bit corny but the more time we spend together the better".

This offers a new insight into copreneurial motivation, shining a light on a business born out of the emotional desire to make the marital dynamic central to the working and domestic day. The couple are writing new characters based on intimate

connection and the business concept is secondary. This is contra to the traditional view of entrepreneurship which places an emphasis on the individual heroic male (Ogbor, 2000; Hamilton, 2006) driven by a business goal.

6.2.7 Separate goals leading to shared endeavours

Spousal support is firmly at the heart of the Branding Company's birth based on a shared desire to achieve autonomy. The couple articulate how the formation of their copreneurial characters was born out of personal motivation and mutual desire to enable their intimate partner to achieve an idealised goal to be their own boss. Alice describes her motivation as an emotional desire to remove herself from a difficult working relationship, and prove that she could succeed in the eyes of her family. Mark describes his long-term goal had always been to be independent and have his own business:

> **Alice:** "And then I'd always wanted my own business and I think Mark…"
>
> **Mark:** "I always wanted my own business…I was expecting that I would…I was just biding my time getting enough experience to the point where I felt 'now I can legitimately set out on my own…"
>
> **Alice:** "Yes and I think I things happen for a reason and I, we met at work and then I left because you know it was too uncomfortable and then went up to work for a large advertising agency in London and I really didn't like it unfortunately, I had a lady boss, and we didn't get on at all and then I worked for another company err after that and the same thing happened…".

The focus of the narrative highlights the couples drive to maintain emotional and relational equilibrium in their working environment. Their performances revolve

around their relationally embedded family practices (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003) grounded in the intimate link to their partners needs both emotionally and professionally. This *"couple context"* (Danes & Jang, 2013) indicates an alternative way of understanding the entrepreneurial process grounded in a relationship with an intimate other. Mark's goals articulate a desire to maintain his original premise of one day being his own boss, but it is also drawing on his relational drive to enable Alice to achieve her goal of working in an emotionally healthy environment. This drive to enable an entrepreneurial partner to succeed is articulated in the narratives of the majority of the participant businesses. This maintains the current perspective that spousal support plays a key role in establishing a copreneurial business (Danes & Jang, 2013).

One of the longer-term issues around spousal commitment is reflected in the ability of the businesses to function, and grow according to changing goals of the couples over time. Goffman's (1990) observations on the human aspiration to move from a lower to higher status, reflects how the participants articulate their experiences as copreneurs. They describe how the couples aspire to rewriting the working day to blend the public and the private into a different script.

6.2.8 Writing the spousal characters to maintain a family business script

The majority of the participants in the study were rewriting their lives to create new copreneurial characters, but for the Dairy farmers they found themselves performing an established drama. Pat and William articulate how they strive to maintain a united front with Pat performing the role of calming pacifier to William's passionate and eruptive character. He describes how he has been involved in the family business since childhood, and Pat admits that her involvement has grown over the period of their marriage. The couple articulate how they have been part of a small community

all of their lives and this is how they met and fell in love. Pat describes how she has known William and his family since their school days and has always had an understanding of his role in the family business. There was never any question of William's involvement in the family farm as it has been his passion for as long as he can remember "...I love farming its ma hobby, me passion, it's me life..." Pat explains how she has had to learn about the business over the years having previously been a "townie" that married into a farming family.

Pat and William describe how they have found it very challenging to be part of a family business working with William's brothers who continue to battle over the inheritance of the family farm. They have "...had to sacrifice the two other farms to buy out the family". Powell and Eddleston (2013: 261) suggest that work-family conflict are commonly found in family business research and Eby *et al.,* (2005: 125) in their review of the literature on work and family between 1980-2002 highlight the prevalence for family conflict in family business research. Pat reflects on the complexities of farming families who may find it difficult to maintain their relationships through the generations:

> **Pat:** "...unless you have a family where they will all work together there comes a point when there's always a third party, might be a husband, or a wife of a son, or daughter that maybe doesn't show an interest as such, doesn't realise what they've gone into, sees one person maybe working differently to another, or not as the case maybe thinks that one's getting more than the other, and it creates problems".

Pat describes how there has been a great deal of heartache for the family as they were forced to move from the home that they love as part of the sale. She explains that both

continue to maintain a positive outlook through incredibly difficult circumstances. William describes how he is fuelled by his passionate drive to retain ownership of the Dairy for his children should they choose to become involved, although repeated reference to the dispute indicates that he has been deeply hurt by the rift.

6.3 Creating a different entrepreneurial script to challenge the current hegemonic perspectives

The study of entrepreneurship and family firms continues to be viewed in terms of the heroic individual, usually male setting out on a solitary quest to succeed (Blenkinsopp & Owens, 2010; Dimov, 2007; Hamilton, 2006). The entrepreneur is narrated in patriarchal terms with the female spouse seen as part of the support network (Hamilton, 2006, 2013; Rowe and Hong, 2000). This study identifies the importance of the equality of business role for many copreneurs, where interpretation of the narratives indicates that both are equally part of the new business. Whilst Table 6, p.134 supports the view of scholars such as Danes and Jang, (2013) who identify that copreneurship represents the traditional perspective of an entrepreneurial leader and supportive spouse. Out of the fourteen couples interviewed, seven reported that they performed an equal role in the joint business venture.

Exploring character and the performance context further, Goffman (1990) encourages us to consider how each performer inhabits scenes that *"regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance."* He refers to this as the *"social front"* and suggests that all performance adopts this process. The front can be broken down into its *"standard"* components of *"setting, personal front and manner"* (P.32). Table 7, p.152 develops the copreneurial context derived from analysis of the narratives in this study. It highlights how the

copreneurial context challenges the individualized perspective adopted by Goffman (1990). For the copreneurial *"Setting"*, (Goffman, 1990: 32) the props and set may represent both their public and personal space. Many of the copreneurs articulate how they run their businesses from home. This indicates that their newly constructed copreneurial characters often also inhabit their intimate stage sets such as their bedroom. This develops further in Chapters 7 and 8.

The copreneurs describe how they struggle to maintain a *"Personal front"* (p.32) once the business is established. Their new set construction and script creates a more complex drama where they entwine their personal and the public relationship. This develops further in Chapters 7 and 8. The *"Manner"* (p.32) whereby each couple learns to manage their new roles within the business and personal domains highlights the complexities of working alongside an intimate other. Interpretation of the narratives develops a more in-depth understanding of how the couples articulate the creation of their new roles within their new copreneurial framework.

	Goffman context	Copreneurial context
Setting	This incorporates staging e.g. props, set, location. Performer generally has to be present in the setting. The performance ends when the performer leaves the setting.	All of the copreneurs in the study articulate that they were unable to separate their business from their personal setting. Home and work often the same building.
Personal front	The intimate side of the performer embedded in the performance created for the given audience. This moves from scene to scene.	The in depth analysis of the narratives shines a light on the creation of copreneurial characters. It highlights how they are recreating their social front to create a new status for their intimate relationship. These characters do not always maintain the intimate, personal spaces previously created with their spouse once they have written the copreneurial script.
Manner	The way an individual delivers a performance according to a given situation such as, forceful, confident, leadership passive, apologetic, following others.	Copreneurs weave a more complicated story of intimacy and ambition. They are constructing a duologue within a play that enables them to perform in unison, either, enabling their partner to achieve their ideological goals or, becoming part of their spousal shared ideologies and goals

Table 7 Construction of the social front (Goffman, 1990) [with the addition of a copreneurial context]

Goffman (1990: 36) suggests that the performer inhabits both the general and the abstract world constructed by the social front. He claims that:

> *"However specialized and unique a routine is, its social front, with certain exceptions, will tend to claim facts that can be equally claimed and asserted of other, somewhat different routines..."*

If we consider this in terms of the copreneurial stories then they inhabit the generalised and abstract world of an entrepreneur or family business owner. This creates a setting for copreneurship which enables the actors to perform their abstracted roles using the existing script, which includes a detailed description of the characters who consist of the entrepreneur and supportive spouse (Danes & Jang, 2013) who is usually female (Hamilton, 2006). The generalised staging consists of a framework influenced by the copreneurs understanding of entrepreneurship observed in the media and popular press. The copreneurial actors are able to fantasize about performing in such an idealised theatre where their dreams can come true.

The couples chose to rewrite their identities based on their limited understanding of what it would be like to perform on an entrepreneurial stage. Goffman (1990) also has a warning for those who observe the ensuing drama, suggesting that:

> *"While in fact these abstract standards have a different significance in different occupational performances, the observer is encouraged to stress the abstract similarities."*(p.36)

Currently the extant literature continues to take a familiar hegemonic stance on the copreneurial dynamic, and whilst the debate now acknowledges the important and visible role that many women play in copreneurial business. What has emerged from

the analysis is that the audience are choosing to observe only a small number of the performers available in the show.

Deborah from the Preserve Company tell a story of survival through adversity, where their copreneurial characters are at the heart of their desire to innovate their way out of their business difficulties. Deborah describes how they are both acting entrepreneurially, in it together to ensure their survival. Deborah explains how they took out a bank loan to purchase her parents café and how she now works part time in a school to make ends meet:

> **Deborah:** "...during the winter time err the café wasn't really busy , busy enough to meet all our overheads and we'd taken out quite a big loan to , to buy the business off my father so I was doing a bit of both and it worked well because I was obviously not at work during school holidays, and things erm and then, knowing that we needed to increase our turnover, erm, we started to erm, make some jams and chutney's and things so that we could sell those alongside, as sort of an extra, so if somebody ordered a welsh rarebit or a ploughman's, and they would buy some pickle because they'd liked what they'd had with their meal, they would buy a jar to take away with them and we could see that that could be a way we could increase sales...".

Deborah articulates the moment another crisis threatened to destroy their business for a second time:

> **Deborah:** "And so that's what we did, and it gradually grew bigger and bigger doing it that way and so then in erm 2001 when the foot and mouth epidemic hit all of a sudden we had no trade in the café and err, err we were sort of facing the situation we'd been in years before where we couldn't meet our bills

> and, erm, thought we, we're heading down the same road again, and we had about a week or 10 days where we just thought 'what are we going to do?', and erm in the end we got our heads together and said, look the kitchen isn't producing anything because we've got no customers ' so let's use that space and that time and see if we can't build that side of it up, and that's exactly what we did".

Deborah shares an important life event (Phoenix, 2012) which demonstrates how the couple periodically rewrite their story of love and determination through entrepreneurial endeavour to provide for their lives. Deborah describes how they were not prepared to experience business failure again and so determined to find a way to innovate and survive. Phoenix (2012) describes the use of *"key themes in narrative"* (p.75) that helps to construct historical and social context. For Deborah the key themes revolve around how she articulates their shared desire to continue their performance as a married couple who share a business and home.

6.4 Identifying the four main themes that have emerged from examining the copreneurial premise for copreneurial business

The narrative analysis of the couple's stories identified four main premises for copreneurship derived from the idealised starting point articulated by each of the participants (Fig. 10, p.156). This section examines the use of language in terms of the interpretation of the copreneurial narratives in a more detailed way, drawing on the individual's articulation of their copreneurial story Squire (2012) suggests that such analysis reveals the rich details of human experience through the stories that we tell. It reveals the multi-layered interpretation of such stories drawing in the various players to build a narrative around the sense making process. As with Egri (1960), we start

with the premise enabling us to understand the construction of the characters in the story. Only when we have put the flesh on the bones can we pen their version of the copreneurial story embedded in the narrative presented to us. As with any dramatic performance, we are only witness to a chosen version of the story enmeshed in many layers of their socially constructed world. The performers present themselves in terms of socially constructed norms, which Goffman suggests represents a *front,* which becomes *a collective representation and a fact in its own right* (1990: 37).

This study revealed four main copreneurial premises interpreted from the in-depth interviews (Fig. 10).

Figure 10: Themes from the narratives: Four different copreneurial premise

6.4.1 The Corner Stone

The narrative analysis indicates that half of the couples performed within the traditional *"social front"* (Goffman, 1990: 34) for copreneurship where, the businesses are born out of the ambition of the entrepreneurial and a supportive spouses (Danes & Jang, 2013). The supportive partner represents the corner stone of the relationship, the stone by which two walls are anchored, enabling their intimate partner to achieve their career goal.

Verity from the Car Maintenance Company tells the story of a couple performing the stereotypical copreneurial roles discussed by Marshack (1994) in her comparison of the work-home practices of dual earning couples and copreneurs. This is a position that remains central to the debate on the copreneurial dynamic (Danes & Jang, 2013; McAdam & Marlow, 2013) highlighting the tendency towards stereotypical gender activity. She uses narrative to highlight her subjugated role within the marital and business relationship. She describes how the business has grown from Chris's passion for cars and a desire to work for himself and through Verity's help and support, he has been able to leave his previous job to establish the business.

Verity narrates a story where the couple have always performed along very traditional gendered lines, with Chris playing a nominal role in parenting and the domestic side of their lives. Verity suggests that his patriarchal approach to family life has impacted on home life throughout the marriage. Reflecting in her narrative as she expresses frustration and resignation. She describes the early days of their marriage where he made his views on her new job and the role she should be playing in their married relationship very clear:

> **Verity:** "...I started that, a week after we got married so that wasn't the best start to our marriage. I worked there for a couple of years and it just was putting us under a lot of pressure, and we were also at that stage, where we weren't sure whether we were going to start a family or not and eventually Chris said something's got to give, it's your work or me and so I packed my job in...".

Verity describes her struggle to rewrite her character as a married woman trying to conform to her husband's stereotypical perspective on work and home. This complex restructuring of her life continues as she describes the editing of their new script. The couple became parents and Verity suggests that she accepted the role as a co-director in Chris's new businesses. The language Verity uses to describe this part of their lives presents the audience with a capable, competent woman who is able to organise her less educated husband, and yet the story she is telling contradicts this version. She articulates her relational drive to enable others, placing Chris's needs before her own rendering her invisible to the public, work domain (Cole, 1997; Hamilton, 2006; 2013; McAdam & Marlow, 2013; Mulholland, 1996;). It is important for Verity to articulate her role within the business and the relationship as the enabler. She is presenting herself through her narrative as the person with the intellectual capability to ensure that Chris has the right people in place to construct the business:

Verity explains how the couple have adapted to their need for autonomy within the marriage although it would seem that Chris has been more able achieve this goal, Verity describes how she has struggled to make her voice heard, and maintains that their business relationship is easier if they maintain their separate domains:

> **Verity:** "Having the job sort of separate where he does the practical side and I do the paper work side works, works best, err, but you know occasionally we have to go down stairs and talk about something and one of us usually ends up storming out".

Danes and Jang (2013) express the importance of spousal commitment for firm success they suggest that a good couple relationship will provide greater access to *"spousal resources"* needed for a copreneurial business (p. 47). Verity explains how she provides both professional and domestic labour to the partnership but identifies that she increasingly struggles to see herself through her husband's eyes. Verity articulates how it has been hard for her to be a 'stay at home mum' and throughout the growth of the family she has been involved in various projects. She explains how it is important to her that her intellectual skills are valued seeking challenging projects outside of her relationship with Chris, whom she believes is unable to understand or value her capabilities. Danes and Olson (2003) suggest that a certain level of *"family tension and conflict"* can benefit a business by focussing *"resources on targeted goals"* which can lead to business growth (p.55). They also state that conflict can be destructive and serve to undermine the relationship leading to *"unfocused goals"* (p.55). This appears to be the developing story for Verity who is rewriting her entrepreneurial script to fulfil her desire to be respected and heard.

Verity articulates how she is growing her individual portfolio through her development of a ski holiday company, and manages this alongside the garage, as well as continuing to be part of a number of community projects which she admits can leave little time for anything else:

Verity: "I run ski holidays in Bulgaria which I didn't intend to start-up as a business…"

Angela: "Is it important to you to have your own project?"

Verity: "Absolutely, I love using my brain and when I was at home with the children I got involved in with everything I could voluntarily. I ran the local pre-school up the road, ran the business side… I was a school governor for a while, I also edit a family magazine…".

Verity articulates how work plays a dominant part in both of their lives leaving them little time to grow their marital or parental relationship with the family. Verity describes how the rewriting of their lives to construct their copreneurial characters has presented the couple with a number of healthy growing business ventures at the cost of their familial relationships:

Verity: "He still see me sitting upstairs err and you know one of the reasons I'm still working from home is 'cause if he needs and extra pair of hands or he needs someone to go and get something…".

Verity suggests that Chris categorises her as a housewife because the work that she was doing was unpaid or earning her a nominal income. Her role in their business remains invisible and therefore this has been the impetus for Verity to develop her entrepreneurial ideas into tangible business. The couple are now at a stage where Chris is beginning to recognise that Verity is developing a number of projects that are making an impact on the family finances, which she hopes will be the turning point for his acknowledgement that she is no longer just his wife with 'hobbies'. There is very little sign that this will lead to any relinquishing of power by Chris, and Verity

continues to maintain that her growth as an entrepreneur and mother is managed alongside Chris's very traditional standards. Her life is interwoven with complexities and contradictions which show no sign of a satisfactory resolution should they choose to continue on their current path.

6.4.2 A different way of performing entrepreneurship: The female entrepreneurial lead and supportive male spouse

In contrast, the story of Amanda and James presents a story of abstract differences that push against the traditional view of copreneurship. Amanda describes how she was encouraged by friends to start her own water purification company following her frustration over the practices of her employer. James had taken redundancy and opted to retire on the proceeds.

The couple discourse built around the way in which they construct their start-up story to the researcher their audience is of commitment to the rewriting of their lives to create their copreneurial identity as characters in their new script. Danes and Jang (2013: 49) define the copreneurial identity as:

> *"[...] a dyad level concept representing shared cognitions that members feel central, enduring, and distinctive such as the goals for a new business".*

The couple articulate this shared cognition through their interweaving of their start-up story. They describe how the business has developed to enable Amanda to offer clients a different approach to the traditional business model in her area of expertise. James describes how he has been happy to use his redundancy to finance the business and brought his financial expertise in banking to complement Amanda's experience in the water treatment industry. This perspective supports the work of McAdam and

Marlow (2013) who suggest that the traditional hegemonic perspective on copreneurship of the heroic male at the helm is only part of the story.

The couple tell a powerful story of their developing *"mutual copreneurial identity"* (Danes and Jang, 2013: 51) as copreneurs. The predominant motivation is to enable Amanda to deliver her business in a relational way. They admit that their motivation has never involved the desire for vast profits, but do express their desire to enable the company to grow. They present a *"shared cognition"* which adds strength to the ability of their business to draw on the spousal resources available to them (Danes & Jang, 2013).

6.4.3 The Lovers

A major area of contribution is found in the premise for the Skin Care Company where the couple articulate how they perform in complete contrast to the recognised entrepreneurial path. They describe their relationship as having always been the main motivation for recreating their identity as copreneurs. Initially the couple explain how they bought a business based on their desire to move to the [the country] and spend more time together. They had no business experience and thought that it would enable them to reduce their working hours and have a better quality of life:

> **Sam:** "...we've always been good mates so we've always got plenty to talk about, it's always nice and everything's so it's not a hardship and then the beginning of the Millennium we actually made a decision that we wanted to move up here to live and take on a little business and work together in a business, so we did take on a little business and work together in a business, so we did that... lifestyle change, we ended up getting a little café...".

Interpretation of the narratives highlights how the development of their copreneurial characters enabled the couple to gain in entrepreneurial confidence. They describe how their initial move into entrepreneurship motivated by their desire to maintain their relational characters, but as their confidence grew, they became more able to spot the opportunities for growth and innovation. They have been able to remain closely aligned to their original premise of providing themselves with a lifestyle change by identifying which business was too much work. They articulate how their decision to sell the café was driven by a desire to place their relationship at the heart of their entrepreneurial decisions.

The couple discourse identified that a number of things changed for them. Eleanor describes her frustration that she could no longer afford to buy her usual brand of skin care and decided to learn how to make her own based on natural products. Using their network of kin and customers in the shop to carry out some market research, they introduced the new products slowly seeking feedback. They had built up a small network of business owners many of whom ran hotels and B&B's in the area. They expressed an interest in the new products and encouraged the couple to develop a range of products suitable for their professional needs. Production and demand for their range of products grew to such a level that in 2007 they made the decision to leave the shop and set up a business to produce their skin care range. They acquired suitable premises that enabled them to manufacture on a much larger scale, and they are now at the point where they could move to even larger premises and employ more staff due to the increasing demand for their products.

The story Sam and Eleanor present is a very different picture of entrepreneurship embedded in relationship. The couples abiding love for each other is at the centre of their decision making process. They have moved from initially taking any opportunity

for change based on their love for each other to becoming "The Pillars of the Temple". They have been able to spot a new opportunity, develop Eleanor's idea and grow a new business based on their original premise.

Joyce Fletcher (1999) suggests that, *"growth fostering"* activity is not an instant fix for an organization but that it is something embedded in the relational based on *"mutuality and authenticity"* (p. 18). The couple did not discuss what role each should play prior to new venture creation, but simply found that they fell into their current roles through time. They are happy to interchange the roles that they play to enable the company to reach its full potential.

Denise Fletcher (2010) highlights the lack of research in this complex area of lifestyle copreneurship. This indicates an important finding that sheds a light on the part that intimacy plays on the decision making process for copreneurs. Fletcher (2012: 454) suggests that the current discourse on copreneurship shows that these businesses not motivated by growth and profit, and yet Sam and Eleanor continue to develop their business with every intention to expand. They describe how they continue to place their intimate relationship at the centre of their premise, but this does not prevent them from having ambition and drive for a company that they are very passionate about. They offer a unique perspective on copreneurial premise which stands in stark contrast to the current discourse on new venture creation in the extant literature.

6.4.4 'The Pillars of the Temple'

Sasha and Tony from the Theatre Company have been together since first meeting at a high profile event for the Millennium in 2000. Sasha is the Artistic Director and Tony is Head of Production. The company relocated to France and Sasha and Tony bought a property and land where they have now built an at height performance space. The

couple explain how the business is driven by their continued passion and belief in what they are doing which would seem to be central to their personal relationship. They reached a pivotal point at the end of the project that they were no longer happy to work for somebody else. The narrative highlights the different stages that the couple were at in their lives. Tony refers to his age as a factor in making the decision to rewrite his story and Sasha describes how she needed to develop her artistic wings:

> **Tony:** " I got to the point at forty something that I didn't want to work for big organisations anymore and I didn't like that, as I suppose we all go through it and then there, there seemed an opportunity to jump out of it and start something of our own".
>
> **Sasha:** "...was probably like a turning point for me because ...it gave me the opportunity to start this new venture erm as a creative more so than a performer..."

In Birley and Westhead's *"Taxonomy of Business Start-up Reasons"* (1994: 15), the need for independence they suggest supports Hofsted's (1980) *"scale of individualism, where personal control and freedom of choice are paramount to the business founder"*. They examined multiple start-up motivations in entrepreneurs and using cluster analysis, they developed *"seven generalized 'types' of owner-managers"*. Their findings were able to show that whilst they were able to identify a variety of start-up reasons and types of entrepreneurial founding individuals, this had little effect on the *"growth", "wealth creation"* or job creation by the diverse businesses in their study (p.7). This is reflected in the start-up stories of the participants in this study who report a variety of reasons and stages in their business lives.

Tony's new story is embedded in his start-up story, expresses his desire to break away from the structural conformity of a large organization where he feels he has no personal control.

Sasha acknowledges that she is ready to grow and expand her artistic capabilities:

> **Sasha:** "It was perfectly the right time, and at the point, it's funny because I got offered a job with Cirque and I went over there to do like a three week work shop and they offered me a job and I turned it down thinking, it's too late for me. I want to, I want to create work rather than being in it".

Here Birley and Westhead (1994: 17) identified this as the desire for *"personal development"* linking these findings to the work of Scheinenberg and MacMillan (1988), who suggested that such an approach is:

> *"[...] non-masculine. It is here where the personal effect of the entrepreneur is seen as directly affecting the performance of the business; while simultaneously the business is seen as the means to keep developing the entrepreneur"* (in Birley and Westhead, 1994:17).

The two separate approaches create the *"Pillars of the temple"* (Gibran, 1995: 24) both equally strong and able to form a firm support for road ahead.

The couple endeavour to drop the masks that have represented how they have performed in their previous life drama, they are redesigning the stage on which they are now able to present their new characters. For Sasha and Tony they are presenting new copreneurial characters better suited to the new roles that they have written for themselves.

Deborah and Toby from the Preserve Company maintain their copreneurial characters by embedding them in family practices. Both sets of parents are entrepreneurs and the couple have been involved with family business throughout their married lives. In Deborah's narrative, she identifies that they have always worked closely together motivated by their desire to have a career that suits their ambition to provide for both their family and the local community. They are not driven by wealth but work closely together to maintain their family script:

> **Deborah:** "I think we're very comfortable, and very, very, relaxed and happy with our lot really, and don't think we're looking you know to, make an awful lot of money. As long as we've got enough to go on our holidays, and to, enjoy what we're doing and I've no great ambition I think. When I speak to these various business gurus an things they say 'oh y' know you want to make X million in so many years' and am thinking well do you know what, I'm happy as I am so err it's not necessarily all about money, it's nice to be content, but having been through what we've been through. I'm really determined that whatever we do we do it slowly and gradually, and that a there's no risk of going back and losing it all again because we've been there I know what it's like".

This supports the work of Baines *et al.,* (2007: 173).who suggest that such an approach emphasis's the desire for the *"survival and flourishing of households dependent on micro-business and self-employment".*

The three couples performing the role of "Pillars of the Temple" narrate a different perspective on copreneurship identified in the extant literature. This study contributes empirically to a new understanding of the formation of the copreneurial characters by

highlighting the couples who are developing joint entrepreneurial identities. This study contributes empirically to the findings of Fletcher (2010) who found that such couples have *"a shared hobby, or skill,"* (p. 463) that motivates them to start a business together.

6.4.5 'Love amongst the Ruins'

Carrying out an interpretative phenomenological analysis of the participant's narratives has *"capture[d] and explore[d] the meanings the participants assign to their experiences"* (Reid, Flowers, Larkin, 2005: 20). Whilst shining a light on the intimacies of the day-to-day lives of this group of copreneurs the final premise for the business that emerged dealt with "The Love amongst the Ruins". This category found that the copreneurs articulate a drive to continue with the business come-what-may to their business and personal lives. It is an unexpected perspective that emerged from the narratives highlighting the continued involvement of the spouses in businesses that were clearly failing both commercially and personally to provide the couples with any of their start-up goals and ideologies. These couples identified catastrophic effects on both their finances and health and yet still maintained that the business was their best hope for the future.

Whyley (1998: 53) suggests that such businesses often carry on long after the business should have closed. *"Consequently, small business failure is not, in most cases, a single event but a very long process of anxious reflection and desperate negotiation,* For Gary and Nick and Celia and David they have been unable to rewrite their script to produce the performances embedded in their relational fantasy. Both couples are motivated by the desire to follow a dream of making something that they love into a business.

6.4.6 Celia and David the Vineyard owners

Celia from the Vineyard weaves an exciting tale of discovering a Vineyard for sale on a family holiday in 2003. Birley and Westhead's (1994:14) suggest that, *"discovering an opportunity"* can play a key role in motivating people to become self-employed Celia describes how an opportunity arose and they took advantage of it with no apparent comprehension of the risks involved. She explains that they were at a stage in their lives where they were ready to make a radical change, and having both worked in IT successfully for many years they were now in a financial position to take on their own project.

Birley and Westhead (1994) suggest that the greatest indicator of risk for self-employment in families was the financial risk. Celia's narrative highlights the couples life stage (Aldrich and Cliff, 2003; Fletcher, 2010) whereby they have reached a point in their careers where they are financially comfortable and therefore perceive themselves to be in a position to be able to take a risk to follow their dream. Celia articulates their lack of experience or knowledge of owning or running a Vineyard and carried out no research prior to the purchase based on an ideological dream of performing their romantic fantasy enabling them to follow their passion. This supports Goffman's (1990: 45) notion of creating, a *"social front"* or an, upwardly mobile script, he suggests that:

" [...] in most stratified societies there is an idealization of higher strata and some aspiration on the part of those in low places to move to higher ones".

He also goes on to explain that such a desire for aspirational change does not come without *"sacrifice"* (p.45). For Celia she explains how the couple initially both gave up their previous employment to concentrate on the new business, selling their home

in the UK and moving with their youngest daughter out to France leaving their two older sons in the UK to complete their further education. They had placed themselves on a new stage where they were not aware of the script or the new characters that they would have to perform alongside. They had not considered the implications of becoming a business owner with a very different character and stage direction to that which they were used to performing:

> **Celia:** "So it's more of a passion that made us to do it, so we've kind of bought our dream rather than a business. I dunno if that's a different perspective to some things that other people do, but, that's not always the greatest thing to do, because buying something from a passion point of view, you may not have the right business head to then back up all that, which is probably what lots of people say about it?"

The narrative indicates Celia's desire to reflect the experience of other couples who have had similar experiences to them. She appears to need reassurance that she is performing in a universal script where other performers have stepped onto the stage without first reading the script and learning their lines too. This is a recurring theme in this study where other participants echo the lack of business experience or planning prior to business start-up, Chapter 8, looking at the copreneurial drama, explores this in detail. Only three of the couples in this study articulated that they had any experience of running a business prior to this new venture creation.

Celia articulates how the reality of their dream of owning and managing a Vineyard was far more difficult than they had first imagined:

> **Celia:** "But visiting Vineyards understanding what went on erm, doing wine tastings and just everything about it really and we just kind of got gripped by

> the idea of making the products ourselves. Which is great but then at the back end of that is the last thing we ever really thought about was well, OK, we've got all this wine what are we gonna do with it now? I suppose we'd better sell it and we kind of didn't really think that it would be quite as difficult as it actually turns out to be. And that's a real big, big job, the selling part and it's not the bit that either of us like. So [laughing] I don't mind talking to people and selling it you know, at the door, but trying to talk to other businesses and, and, and work like that, business to business is just, especially since people that own Vineyards I mean we're just a small business aren't err, tiny business really. So you don't have any clout and that makes it even harder really".

Celia explains that their initial fantasy of working full time was impossible to fund, and that they had not thought through the production and sale of their wine. Wine production in France built on a model that has taken many years for the indigenous businesses to develop. For David and Celia their lack of knowledge led to a number of foreseeable mistakes including the inability to realise that the turnaround time for producing a drinkable wine would leave them with a period when they would not be creating any income. On purchasing the Vineyard they had acquired the land and the vines, but failed to realise that they also needed to negotiate for the grapes which the previous owner sold on to the local cooperative:

> **Celia:** "Because we bought the Vineyard, we had the vines but there wasn't any wine because he sold the grapes to the cooperative…erm so of course, the our first bottle of wine that we had to sell wasn't until spring of 2005".

The couple were unable to offer any wine for sale until three years after the purchase of the Vineyard. They had entered into the drama without first rehearsing the roles

that they would need to play in their new social reality. Goffman (1990: 37) suggests that:

> *"[...] a given social front tends to become institutionalized in terms of the abstract stereotyped expectations to which it gives rise, and tends to take on a meaning and stability apart from the specific tasks which happen at the time to be performed in its name. The front becomes a 'collective representation' and a fact in its own right".*

In the same way that a young child steps into the clothes of a parent and takes on the mantle of an adult in the mirror, Celia narrates how the couple take on the costume of Vineyard owners without having any concept of the reality of the role. She describes how the family are now living through a period where their choices are limited due to the amount of money and personal capital that they have committed to the business. Celia suggests that they are unable to make a definitive decision on how to move forward, which is leaving them with a situation where eventually the decision is made for them. Celia explains that David has returned to his job in IT and commutes to the UK on a weekly basis. This leaves Celia to manage both the business and domestic. The narrative indicates that her world has become combined, with no differentiation between her public and private characters:

> **Angela:** "And how does that feel you doing ...most of the, this part of the job?
>
> **Celia:** "How does it feel erm tiring [laughing] tiring and, and, sad that we're not doing it together which is what we wanted to do, cause we bought the Vineyard in 2003 and I was here for the first, for the rest of 2003 on my own with [daughter]…".

Celia's character in the interview presents a performance of world worn acceptance Celia admits that having to play the role of main relational and business manager throughout the years has taken its toll on her emotionally and she is very weary and worried for their future:

> **Celia:** "I can't keep working like this anyway so something's gonna give somewhere, I've no idea what, cause we talk about this quite a lot, what we gonna do, and how, how can we change things improve things you know? Have a bit more personal time erm and we can't, actually at the moment we still haven't come up with that magic answer whatever that might be."

I was aware throughout the interview that Celia was feeling worn down by the fight she is having between the desire to succeed and the need to resolve their family difficulties. Her story is one of the broader struggle of women to perform a key role on the stage of paid work, and a personal desire to maintain a private role as both mother and wife. Celia does not refer to the fact that David has had to change very little concerning the infrastructure of his domestic responsibilities. Currently the business continues to take precedence over their personal needs with both choosing to sacrifice their need to maintain an intimate relationship for the long-term success of the business. This is considered in detail in Chapter 7.

In placing the business before their personal needs, the family now find themselves in a situation where they are unable to provide for each other's needs in the way that they thought they would after the purchase of the business. Their new characters do not match up to the fantasy based around their desire to make a passion into a business as a shared endeavour.

6.4.7 Nick and Gary: Executive training

Nick and Gary have had been a number of critical events in their lives as a couple that have had lasting and varied effects on the way that they run their business and personal relationship. The company offers arts based training and development primarily based in the public sector. Their story embedded in their intimate characters as a couple struggling to cope with many personal difficulties including loss and ill health has prevented them from achieving their start-up goals. They identify how they became reliant on the close network of friends to support them through many years of difficulties:

> **Gary:** "In, in 2004 I was still on dialysis…"
>
> **Gary:** "We were in Spain we were having a fantastic time we were on the beach and everything like that and err, Nick had a massive heart attack [laughs nervously] so that was very unexpected, completely out of the blue, erm and, erm and then in Spain as well".
>
> **Nick:** "Poor colleague".
>
> **Gary:** So yea, colleague, having thought 'Oh you know I have to deal with one sick person in this in this business' you know suddenly there's two of us, anyway she was great she was she was soldiering on…"

Whyley (1998: 69) highlights the propensity for some failing businesses to continue until the decision is taken out of their hands demonstrated by all three of the businesses under discussion in this section.

Work and home life are also homogenized for Gary and Nick and they articulate no clear demarcation of office and home time. This supports the current understanding of the complexities of self-employment (Baines *et al.,* 2003; 2007) and working within a copreneurial business (Danes & Jang, 2013; Fletcher, 2010). Nick explains that the office doubles up as their front room and they blend the needs of the business with any domestic duties, taking an equal role in the maintenance of their work and home environment. They explain how they continue to push forward with the company despite the catastrophic setbacks including having to sell their home, and moving several times into cheaper rented accommodation to rationalise their mounting debts:

Gary: "…so the only thing left to do was sell…"

Nick: "…to try and consolidate that…but it took some doing".

Gary: "And of course we put the house on the market at precisely the wrong time".

Nick: "Just as the economy …"

Gary: "…just as the economy took a dive in 2008"

Nick: "yea 2008".

Gary: "and…but I w, we, we, should have an offer anyway it doesn't matter it's, it's, it's, all water under the bridge now…"

Nick: "…got rid of the debts"

Gary: "…there were long lists and we probably would of got two years earlier so we didn't get as much…".

Nick: "oh mm" [agonised voice from Nick]

Gary: "…but let it go, let it go, yes exactly…".

The narrative suggests that the couple have not been able to emotionally, recover from the experience of losing their home. They describe how they are struggling to recover from the difficulties that they have had to face together:

Gary: "…for the last nine months or so erm,"

Nick: "We've had no work".

Gary: "We've had we've really have had very little work".

Nick: "We've had some coaching work an little bits, bits, and pieces here and there you know a half day here and one day there type of thing and erm

Nick: "We've been…"

Gary: "Apart from that we've been living on our savings".

Nick: "Which have now run out".

Gary: "Which are running out fast so really we need to sort of, we have re-grouped we've erm we're, we're…"

Nick: "Both have" [laughs]

Gary: "We've well, yea we have we've been very good we've…"

Nick: [sniffs and laughs]

Gary: "Life is quite shit but we've…"

Nick: "Life is really tough at the moment".

Cope (2011: 612) suggests that conceptual studies of entrepreneurship need to broaden their focus from the *"financial costs and loss of income"* during business difficulty and failure, also focusing on the social and emotional implications of business failure. Whyley (1998) in her study into small business failure highlights the propensity for many businesses to just struggle on regardless and she states that for many of the businesses in her study:

> *"While these 'head in the sand' tactics enabled them to avoid facing reality, it also meant that their circumstances had often worsened considerably before they finally acknowledged how bad things had become"* (p.65).

This study highlights the relational entrenchment of the couples whereby they appear focused on enabling their partner to fulfil their emotional desires with no regard for the practical needs of the business and their personal lives. Gary and Nick demonstrate the complexities of the couple's personal lives, and its effect on their ability to run a business together. They are moving forward, struggling to make things work and not asking themselves if this is the right way of ensuring that they are providing for their lives. The personal and the professional are so interlinked that they have stopped being able to differentiate between the two. Nick has voiced his frustration at what he is achieving for his life, and Gary is emotionally influencing the use of their spousal resources.

Danes and Jang (2013: 51).suggest that *"if a couple do not communicate effectively, it hinders identity verifications, and thus, identity development"* They struggle to articulate the difficulties of managing a business driven by a certain ethos and passion, and are not able to compromise their core beliefs for income. They are unable to

establish cohesive copreneurial characters embedded in good business practice that will enable them to achieve their start-up goals. They are firmly fixed on their ideological vision of what they wish to achieve from their joint business venture of artistic and emotional fulfilment at the cost of creating a viable business for themselves:

> **Nick:** "You know we ran extra program it just didn't feed our souls the only one that really fed our souls was the one which was working just with the staff with the adults and, I don't know what it is, it's not the kids fault it's just there's something about the flibberty-jibbert kind of it just oh every time we try to do anything with kids…".

Gary and Nick are performing their working lives based on their relational expectations for each other. It is not about the income but determined by personal fulfilment. This has not necessarily been a sound basis for growing a business together. They have developed their business on a lifestyle model (Fletcher, 2010) but have failed to achieve the goals of a lifestyle business to earn enough to give them a better life. They are currently demonstrating a deeply embedded need to work relationally together and with others. This is however problematic as Fletcher observes:

> *"I have found that leaders have difficulty reflecting critically on their own practice, partly because they have internalized stereotypical (gender linked) notions of caring behaviour (and what it looks like in practice) that have little to do with creating high quality, growth-in-connection relational interactions in the service of the work."* (Fletcher, 2012: 97).

6.4.8 Janice and Walter: The Craft Business

Janice and Walter present a story of the struggle to achieve approval in the eyes of others highlighted by Birley and Westhead (1994: 15). The couple entered into the business for very different reasons, with Walter motivated by the love for his hobby and Janice by the need to prove to her mother that she can succeed at something:

> **Janice:** "It's also the finances as well, cause my mum's totally refused to help me at all so it's so it's as, saving our own money to put into it to show her that you know to prove a point you know to make something work in the business it's not just coming from her pocket".

They are unable to write the new drama as a duologue where one is able to complement the performance of the other. They are standing on the stage together but reading lines from two different scripts. Janice is torn in her difficult relationship with her mother and balancing her marital and business relationship with her husband, and Walter is frustrated at what he believes are unreasonable request from Janice's mother who is funding their business:

> **Janice:** "It's difficult cause my mum's a very strong character very strong so she sort of…".
>
> **Walter:** "She sees the money going out but not coming back in".
>
> **Janice:** "Not enough coming back in. We have enough money coming in but…".
>
> **Walter:** "But not enough for what she wants to come in".

The couple explain how the relationship with Janice's mother has broken down and they are facing an uncertain future:

> **Janice:** "She's pulling the plug on…".
>
> **Walter:** "December".
>
> **Janice:** "Not giving us anything so we're basically on our own in December".
>
> **Walter:** "From December onwards".
>
> **Janice:** "So that's gonna be difficult if the business isn't doing for itself it'll be time to think".
>
> **Walter:** "Is it worth it or not?"
>
> Janice: "Yeh".

Janice's narrative identifies that her point of reference is based on how she perceives her emotional well-being:

> **Janice:** "I found it very stressful, I probably found it more stressful than you did cause you sort of show your, you at one point your stress is more coming out in anger where I tend to be, I cry don't I? Either go depressed and I just break down I just cry my eyes out cause I just can't, I just can't cope with it"

Walter admits that he would love to be able to walk away and get back to what he loves, that is building his model planes and avoiding the complexities of their current family situation. This drama is made more complicated with the addition of Janice's mother as the third silent partner in the company. This title is in name only and the reality is that she adds a third relational dimension to their already complex business

relationship. The identities of the performers have developed around an uneasy desire to present the character they feel is appropriate to their audience. Goffman (1990: 37) refers to the "*established social role*" where the staging, characters and script already exist. Walter and Janice have never been able to construct their copreneurial characters because they continue to perform in a well-established familial drama enacted by Janice and her mother.

Janice indicates in the narrative that she is the main protagonist for growth in the company, and during the early stages of the business was able to organise a short-term government funded premises to develop the craft side of the venture. It is clear that the original direction and ethos of the business has been lost through Janice's desire to be part of Walter's project. They have not been able to establish the commitment to each other that would help to establish and grow their company. The couple construct a tale of two people at odds with the purpose of the business, unable to establish some common ground. Janice's involvement in the business initially helped the couple to move forward, but her drive to establish a different focus as a, hobby and crafting business has changed the focus of the company. This has affected the financial viability of the business and alienated Walter from the business that he created. Having reached crisis point the couple sought external support through a marriage councillor:

> **Janice:** "...it was our therapist who'd recommended that, that we, basically there needs to be a time that it's just your relationship time, not business and relationship...We're going away in October 'cause mum's looking after the shop so it's, you know it's still important that you get a break from the business".

They remain unable to severe the link with Janice's mother regardless of the strain that it places on both their business and home lives. The couple had no capital of their own due to previous bankruptcy and do not own their own property, and the company is solely funded by Janice's mother who finances the acquisitions using her credit card which she expects to be paid off monthly. Without Margaret's financial support the business will fail which is causing heightened levels of tension amongst the three partners. Janice torn between, loyalty for her husband and, her relationship with her mother, made more difficult by her need to succeed. She admits that things have been strained recently:

> **Janice:** "My mum and I used to be really close and it's caused a lot of, it's caused a lot of rift really between me and my mum..."

The couple have very little financial understanding of their business admitting that they have had no interest in familiarising themselves with their accounts which are managed by Margaret. They admit that there is increasing tension over their lack of interest and her desire to keep them informed of their financial position. They are unable to see that this is a fundamental part of running a viable business and when quizzed on their current financial position they are unable to provide any figures, admitting that they have never seen any of the accounts of the business:

> **Walter:** "We don't even know what we took".
>
> **Janice:** "I'd ask my Mum for the turn-over".
>
> **Walter:** "I know that we roughly take 700 to 800 pounds per week".

This lack of interest or knowledge of the business highlights a major contribution towards further understanding the complexities of entering into a business with an

intimate other. The couple appear to lack the relational or practical maturity to take on the role as a copreneur, highlighting the dangers of promoting self-employment as the panacea, open to all regardless of their experience or skills.

The analysis shows that there are a number of destructive elements when working with a spouse, where in some cases *"tension and depression* [can] *erode these relationships"* (Whyley, 1998: 116). A lack of a copreneurial character where the couple are unable to perform their new roles as an intimate couple managing a business together, can have a devastating effect on both the relationship and the business.

6.5 From an idealized script to the realities of an everyday performance

Irving Goffman (1990) in his book *"The presentation of self in everyday life"* suggests that:

> *"a performance of a routine presents through its front some rather abstract claims upon the audience, claims that are likely to be presented to them during the performance of other routines"*(1990: 44).

He suggests that such performance is presented as an idealised version of the character based on *"the officially accredited values of society"* (p.45). This exploration of the presentation of self through performance has formed the basis of interpreting the narratives in this study. The primary interest is in the formation of a copreneurial character from an idealised starting point, which in this context is the premise, bringing the characters to life with all of their foibles and imperfections.

Egri (1960: 191) stated that, *"You have your story or play the moment you can answer authoritatively why this man must do something so urgently and immediately.*

Whatever it is, the motivation must have grown out of what happened before the story started. In fact, your story is possible only because it grew out of the very thing that happened before".

This chapter has sought to understand through the narratives, the point at which each couple chose to rewrite their intimate lives to become copreneurs. This section therefore considers the starting point of the copreneurial drama as revealed in the narratives. This consideration of the development of the basis for the premise, and the characters in the narratives, forms the basis for this research design, which draws on the stories of fourteen copreneurial businesses. It seeks to gain an understanding of the idealised starting point for copreneurship, and draw from the narratives how closely the characters resemble their idealised selves. In being asked about their reason for deciding to become a copreneur, the participants talked of a number of reasons why going into business seemed like the right decision for them. Their reasons reflect the desire to perform within the social norms of their tribe or culture that places the family unit, gender role and expectations of the public and private domain at the centre of their decision. All of the couples constructed their start-up story within an emotional or relational context illustrated in (see Table 8, p.186). Interpretation of the narratives using dramaturgical and relational lenses, shines a light on the idealised starting point embedded within the couple identities as intimate and relational characters performing in drama where the public and private blend to form an uncomfortable whole.

They develop each new scene according to personal or couple motivation to fulfil a desire to rewrite their lives as entrepreneurs, or the enabler of an entrepreneur (Danes & Jang, 2013). This study has highlighted the contradictory nature of such a position where individual ideologies may contradict their partner's position within this complex dynamic. (McAdam and Marlow, 2013: 153). Individual ideologies have

grown into shared endeavours, whereby the non-entrepreneurial partner joins the business at a later stage.

Interpretation of the narratives presents a retrospective perspective on the copreneurial experience for the fourteen couples. They have been able to reflect on the original, idealised copreneurial script, and the edited version based on their experiences since the birth of the business. Goffman (1990) highlights the aspirational propensity of actors who perform within an idealised context. He suggests that such characters are driven by their desire to make their lives better, and so move from a lower to a higher place (p.45). This is central to the couple's stories of a better life over the horizon where they will be able to make the rules or fulfil a lifelong dream. Celia and David describe how they constructed their stage around a grand narrative of wine producing landowners in a foreign land:

> **Celia:** "...kind of just grew to love wine and but all the aspects of it not just, I don't mean just drinking it, but visiting Vineyards understanding what went on err, doing wine tastings and just everything about it really and we just kind of got gripped by the idea of making the products ourselves. Which is great but then at the back end of that is the last thing we ever really thought about was well OK, we've got all this wine what are we gonna do with it now.

Emotional	Relational
• Have the dream job. • Want to be own boss • Have work/home balance. • Have a happy Marriage. • To secure a future into old age.	• Escape a job or boss that they hate. • Improve the spousal relationship by working together. • Have happy children by being at home more • Have better relationship with friends and family. • Have good relationship with staff and customers. • To earn enough to financially provide for the family.

Table 8: Highlights the emotional and relational motivation for becoming a copreneur

They reflect the position of all but one of the businesses in the study who stepped onto the new stage without a script or even the briefest of stage directions. Role definition and business structure is articulated as organic and embedded in spousal trust and intimacy. The wife of the Dairy Farmer expressed the importance of their family relationship:

> **Pat:** "...I won't go into details but with everything that's happened over the last ten years, a lot of people wouldn't still be here together that's all I will say to you. But we do have a very, very, good relationship and it's, been built on solid foundations, I think because I enjoy what I do, enjoy the lifestyle that we

> have, and it's, you have to take the ups with the downs with it as it goes along and there have been some very black moments you know, you make the most of what you can and how you can, we all have our fall outs but you know that's part of being a family".

Pat refers to family as a symbol of stability and trust even though the reality of their current situation tainted with family conflict in keeping with the findings of (Danes and Olson, 2003). The couple continue to construct their script around their idealised version of family and business as a perfect balance between the emotional, domestic and business. Deborah presents two characters who are at one with their performance to the audience:

> **Deborah:** "...respect each other as friends and so because of that it, it's not there's no sort of one-up-man-ship or anything like that, we're just a unit together"

Goffman refers to the dilemma that the performers may find themselves in where they are struggling with *"expression versus action"* he suggests that *"those that have the time and talent to perform well may not, because of this, have the time or talent to make it apparent that they are performing well"* (1990: 43).

Alice and Mark remain in a start-up phase of their business sixteen years after the initial launch of their company. They maintain a front that projects success and stability, but struggle to achieve their start-up aspirations of developing a prosperous business that would equal the earnings and lifestyle of their friends and family:

> **Alice:** "because we had a lot of negativity saying 'Oh it will never happen it will never work"

Mark: [laughing]

Alice: "…you know, even now actually I was told last Friday that my mum had been badgered by the all the family, she said I've had so many people saying what's going on, what's going on when are they, you know all the time an she was having a complete breakdown err, about what we were doing err, you know because as am, the, the, money".

Mark: "…because of the money worries on…".

Alice: "Because it's so you know, it's so precarious".

Mark: "… seems it always seems appear to be ultimately based on the size of your house and the, you know?"

They describe how in trying to construct a front that projects an affluence and upward mobility; they have been unable to attain their start-up goals based on their original premise. However, neither can see a way of altering the script to improve their increasingly difficult circumstances. The stories of Janice and Walter, and Celia and David also reflect this story, continuing on the path towards business failure, preferring to wait for somebody else to take the decision to cease trading out of their hands. Whyley refers to such couples as *"strugglers"*, those who try to carry on in spite of the clear indications of potential business failure (1998: 64).

Eleanor and Sam explain how they have created an environment in which their new characters can prosper and grow. They have modified their script according to their changing circumstances, but maintained their original premise of placing their love for each other at the centre of their business strategy and growth:

> **Eleanor:** "…we have very complementary skills, think the reason that it works for us is that we have err, we, we, our skills complement each other".

They articulate how they are rewriting their lives to represent the new copreneurial garments that are forming the new characters in their play. They refer to each other in plural, placing their complimentary abilities at the heart of their reconstructed lives:

> **Sam:** "But the important, I think the other important thing is that our job title, we just use the job titles 'Partner' so were both partners in the business and I think the thing is that what we do is we're, whenever we make any decisions, we always sit down and make those decisions together. So it's effectively you know on way to work, or on a way home, or when we're walking on fells an wherever, if we want to talk about the business cos there's something that's sort of like nagging at us, or we need to sort of think about something and we'll talk it over, and if we're both happy we'll do it, and if one of us isn't then the other one has to try an convince the other one why, or we decide to shelve it because we realise it's not the right thing, so it's a partnership".

This is also reflected by Deborah and Toby, Amanda and James, Sasha and Tony, Pat and Will, and Tammy and Edward. The couples articulate their new lives as embedded in their relationship with their partner. The public and the private form the layers of a new copreneurial life with no tangible separation between the two:

> **Tony:** "But, but I think also this you know cause like you're interviewing us and talking about a business thing, it's never felt like a business. You know I think it's always been like well putting on a show…".
>
> **Sasha:** "It's a lifestyle really".

Tony: "Yeh".

Sasha: "It's part of what we do".

They present their copreneurial characters to the audience on a familiar stage that does not fit with their preconceived concept of entrepreneurial business. The relationship and a desire to pursue their career aspirations remain central to their premise for the business venture.

The importance of the couple identity echoed in their language that reinforces their coupledom. Throughout the interviews with the couples who continue to maintain their start-up goals, they talk about their joint activities. They continually reproduce the "we" in their day-to-day copreneurial lives. Danes and Jang (2013) suggest that the formation of copreneurial characters prospers if the couple are able to maintain the ability to communicate with each other. Such communication is most effective embedded within the intimacy of the historical couple relationship (Berscheid, 1994). This has the potential to produce a strong partnership that can sustain the business beyond start-up.

6.6 Concluding comments

This chapter set out to address the question of how interpretation of the copreneurial narratives could enable us to identify the different premise for recreating a spousal script to become copreneurs. IPA enabled the researcher to examine the detailed stories of the participants.

The first section drew on the work of Goffman (1990) using a theatrical metaphor to demonstrate how the couples perform their copreneurial characters. Informed by Egri (1960) who in discussing the construction of dramatic writing argues that before plot

we need to have a reason for the story and detailed characters to participate in it. Using the Smith *et al.*, (2009) approach to narrative analysis using IPA enabled a detailed examination of the copreneurial stories. They suggest that such analysis can enable researchers to understand *"what happens when the everyday flow of lived experience takes on a particular significance for people"* (p.1). The second section developed a more detailed understanding of how interpretation of the narratives revealed the nuances of the different performances. It also showed how the couples articulated the premise for the rewriting of their intimate lives. The final section showed how the researcher was able to interpret particular experience in their lives of the copreneurs to develop the four premise for copreneurship.

Drawing on a dramaturgical conceptual framework as a means to understand the narratives provides a number of insights. This analysis has shown how the couples articulate the homogenized world of copreneurial business where the business and domestic are interlinked, and intimacy and spousal trust is central to achievement of the start-up goals. It highlights how, on choosing to look at the copreneurial characters, one cannot examine the business without delving into the couple relationship too.

This analysis also highlights the importance of considering the emotional and relational aspects to the formation of a copreneurial business. Many of the narratives describe how the start-up decisions are based on the couple's desire to ensure that their partner is happy and fulfilled. They are rewriting their future based on this premise.

A key finding from the analysis is the embedded nature of the intimate relationship in the goal setting of the couples. They rewrite their characters using their knowledge of each other, which for most of the couples led to writing their new copreneurial script

without any clear planning prior to start-up. Many of the couples entering into such a risky venture articulate a desire to feel emotionally and relationally fulfilled, professionally and personally. The couples described how they have entered into self-employment based on an idealised vision of what a copreneurial life might offer them as an intimate couple. That is, a means to enable each other to create a working life that enables each partner to achieve more personal and relational satisfaction from the business they have created. The couples articulate a variety of premise for becoming copreneurs in their ideological drive to create personal fulfilment and support for their spouse.

Chapter 6 has highlighted the complexities of choosing to combine business with family processes. It considers the dilemmas that can face a couple who are rewriting the public story of entrepreneurship that often presents a single heroic male actor in the press and extant literature (Hamilton, 2013a). The next chapter will contribute to a greater understanding of the entrepreneurial character as part of a dual relationship. Here the heroic metaphor takes on a collective, intimate identity born out of a desire articulated by the couples to rewrite the public and private to construct a new third sphere where their two worlds combine.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7: Building the pivotal characters

7.1 Narrating copreneurial gender identity

7.2 Copreneurial character formation: Creating the theatrical duologue

7.3 Constructing copreneurial character

7.4 Performing in a copreneurial drama: Gender, power and relational practice

7.5 The kitchen sink drama: Understanding gender roles in a copreneurial relationship

7.6 Stepping out of the kitchen, from subjugation to emancipation

7.7 Playing the heroic male on the business and domestic stage

7.8 Freya and Martin the educational psychologists

7.9 Stepping onto the stage and becoming heroes together

7.10 Playing the heroic female

7.11 Concluding comments

Chapter 7 – Building the characters

7.1 Narrating copreneurial gender identity

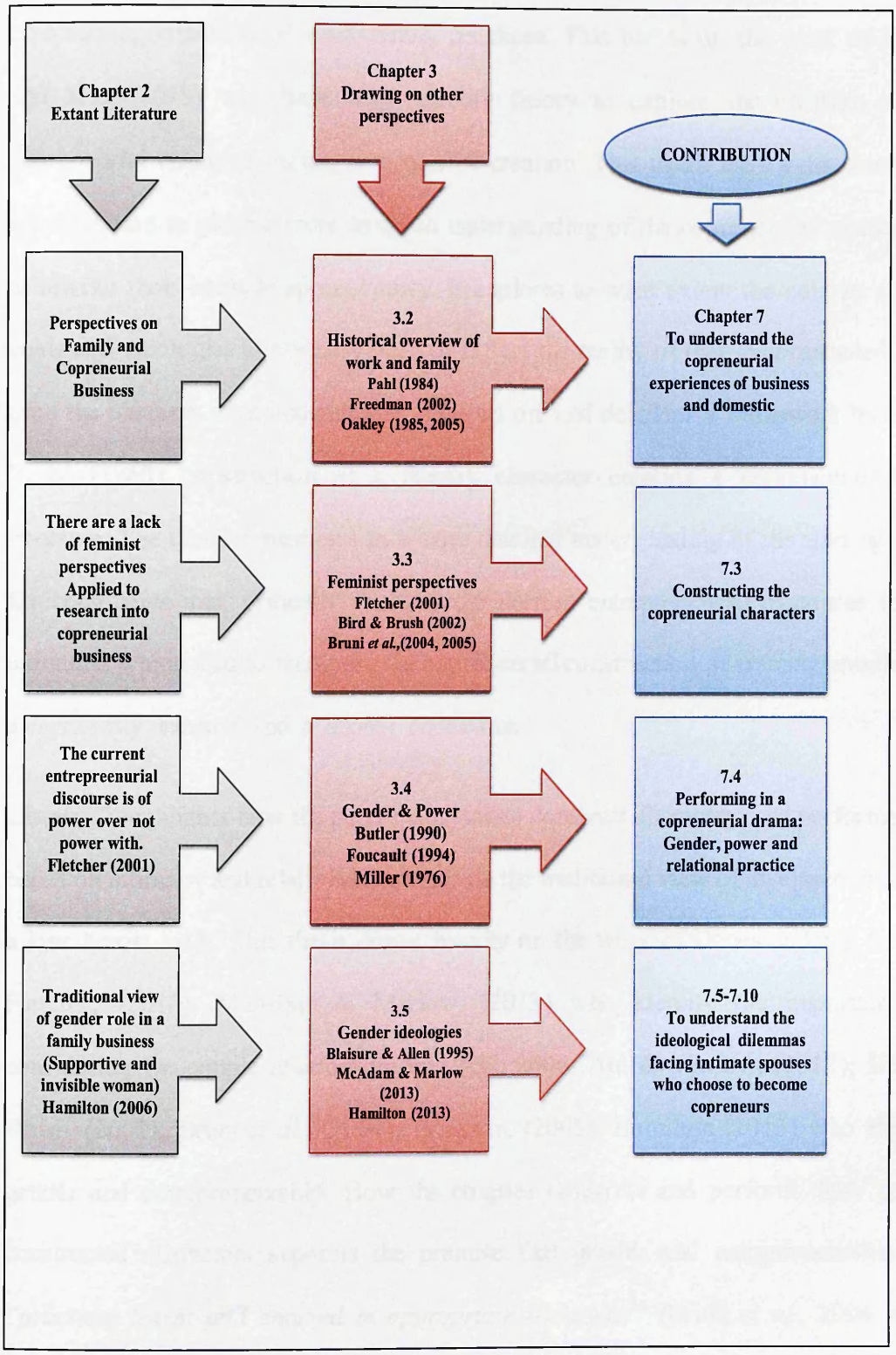
> *"Every object has three dimensions: depth, height, width. Human beings have an additional three dimensions: physiology, sociology, psychology. Without knowledge of these three dimensions we cannot appraise a human being. It is not enough, in your study of man to know if he is rude, polite, religious, atheistic, moral, degenerate. You must know why. We want to know why man is as he is, why his character is constantly changing, and why it must change whether he wishes it or no"* (Egri, 1960: 33).

In Chapter 6 we explored through the stories, the importance of premise for the copreneurial script, examining the motivations of the couples to rewrite the story of their intimate lives as a couple. The following chapter will examine how the narrative sheds light on the construction of the new copreneurial characters. It uses the premise from the previous chapter to develop an understanding of the characters informed by the copreneurs narratives. These characters will take on flesh and draw breath from their socio-historical roots, which will inform how they choose to present this version of their story to the audience. This audience constructed from the researcher who acts as both the audience and the playwright as discussed in detail in Chapter 5, and the reader who takes on the roles as audience and critic. They enter the theatre once the rehearsal is complete and the writer and director are happy with the version of the drama presented to the public. In this particular context, we explore the couple's stories as presented to an interviewer interested in the birth of their copreneurial drama. They are the pivotal characters (Egri, 1960: 106) around which all of the other characters congregate.

This analysis reveals the part that socially constructed norms play in the formation of a copreneurial character. The couples reconstruct their new lives based on a traditional way of performing the relational. They use their gender roles to combine their character into a third relational sphere that represents both work and home (McAdam and Marlow, 2013) particularly for the women. This reveals the part that gender and power play (Hamilton, 2013; Mills & Mullany, 2011) in this reconstruction of their new, entrepreneurial lives. The next chapter will build on these findings with a particular emphasis on the role that women play in the formation of a copreneurial character. This thesis will support the notion that copreneurial gender identities are shaped through "*wider entrepreneurial and other discourses*" (Hamilton, 2013a; b: 89). It will contribute to the development of a new and more nuanced understanding of the experience of becoming and entrepreneur with an intimate other.

Examination of the literature in Chapter 3 revealed that there has been very little exploration of the 'couple context' (Danes & Jang, 2013; Fletcher, 2010; McAdam & Marlow, 2013) in family business and entrepreneurship literature. This thesis will contribute to an understanding of the copreneurial character by interpreting the narratives through a dramaturgical conceptual framework to construct the players using Egri's (1960) method of writing theatrical characters. The thesis argues that the characters cannot be constructed without consideration of a gender perspective, (Ahl, 2006; Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Bird & Brush, 2002; Bruni *et al.,* 2004; Erickson, 2005; Hamilton, 2013, McAdam & Marlow, 2013). Consideration of the literature outside of family business and entrepreneurship provides further insight into the intricacies of performing in a business venture with an intimate other (Fig. 11, p. 196).

Figure 11: Overview of Chapter 7 drawing on the literature review



Chapter 7 contributes to an understanding of the part gender ideology plays in constructing copreneurial work-family practices. This builds on the work of Danes and Jang (2013) who have used identity theory to explore the creation of the copreneurial character during new venture creation. This thesis uses a dramaturgical interpretation to glean a more in depth understanding of the copreneurial motivation, to rewrite their intimate spousal story. It explores to what extent the couples shared goals and ideologies at business start-up reflect the reality of their reconstructed lives once the business is up and running. It draws on, and develops a framework based on Egris' (1960) construction of a literary character creating a copreneurial bone structure. The thesis contributes to a more detailed understanding of the start-up story for copreneurs and, critically evaluate the current entrepreneurial discourse in the literature, which fails to recognise the copreneurial construction of entrepreneurship as a dominantly intimate and relational endeavour.

Chapter 7 highlights how the participant stories construct characters and performances based on intimacy and relationship alongside the traditional view of an entrepreneur as a lone heroic male. This thesis draws heavily on the work of Danes & Jang, (2013); Fletcher, (2010); McAdam & Marlow, (2013) who identify the importance of considering the couple relationship and Ahl, 2006; Ahl & Marlow, (2012); Bird & Brush, (2002); Bruni *et al.,* (2004); Erickson, (2005); Hamilton (2013) who explore gender and entrepreneurship. How the couples construct and perform these newly constructed characters supports the premise that gender and entrepreneurship are *"practices learnt and enacted in appropriate occasions"* (Bruni *et al.*, 2004: 407). These identities are constructed and performed (Bell, 1999; Butler, 1990) within a world embedded in the patriarchal perspectives of the public domain. They create a different perspective on power which is more in keeping with the feminist approach

(Ramazanoğlu & Holland, 2002; Mills & Mullany, 2011) drawing heavily on Foucault (in Faubion. ed., 1994). This perspective as Mills and Mullany (2011: 57) suggest, finds that feminist researchers have:

> *"[...] utilized the metaphor of describing power as a 'net' or a 'web' rather than as a possession that an individual speaker may have. Power, from this perspective, is something that is fluid and needs to be enacted within interaction; it is not simply something that one person 'possess' in relation to another".*

This chapter highlights how the couples articulate their struggle to manage their gender ideologies, based on the socially constructed norms of marriage and paid work, and their new copreneurial lives that challenge this perspective. It shows that there is indeed a gender divide between the way in which the majority of the women approach the creation of their new character, embedded in their relational competencies, and the way the majority of the male spouses approach copreneurship. This highlights the struggle that the couples have between the feminine, relational approach of, nurturing and enabling others, and the autonomous masculine approach to rewriting their intimate characters.

McAdam and Marlow (2013) suggest that we need to challenge the current discourse on entrepreneurship as *"gender neutral"* (Ahl, 2006; Hamilton, 2013a; McAdam & Marlow, 2013). They argue that the extant literature is far from neutral and indeed poses an *"ideological dilemma"* for women who wish to become entrepreneurs. (p.154). This chapter contributes to this understanding by demonstrating from interpretation of the narratives that some copreneurs are attempting to rewrite the script based on their desire to place the relationship and their mutual drive at the

centre of their entrepreneurial endeavours. It will also highlight how the women continue to battle with their position within the copreneurial dynamic as equal players or the relational load bearers. This supports the premise that the women in particular face an ideological dilemma (McAdam & Marlow, 2013) when choosing to enter into a business partnership with their intimate other.

The decision to focus on the couple as the smallest measure of family business (Blenkinsopp & Owens, 2010) led to an addition of literature outside of the field to aid interpretation. Relational theory is:

> *"[...] a model of human growth and development that is an alternative to the masculine bias in mainstream theories of development"* (Fletcher, 2012).

This chapter examines the current essentialist starting point for entrepreneurship which determines that men and women entrepreneurs are essentially different in their performance of entrepreneurship, with the male entrepreneur privileged as the true reflection of entrepreneurial endeavour, and women being presented as the *"other"* (Bruni *et al.,* 2004: 407). We start with the socially constructed, traditional face of coupledom discussed in detail in the literature review, and explore how interpretation of the narratives on copreneurial business in this study challenges some of the current discourse of entrepreneurship and family business as a place where women are predominantly invisible or playing a traditional role (Hamilton, 2006).

This chapter develops and advances the debate on entrepreneurship by joining the limited but important work of researchers who would argue that the copreneurial dynamic is attempting to perform entrepreneurship as part of a complex and multi-layered series of important intimate relationships (Danes & Jang, 2013; McAdam& Marlow, 2013). The narratives indicate that some of the participants are rewriting their

gendered identities to enable each partner to achieve more than they have before in the public and private domains. This researcher will take on the role of a constructionist play-write aware of the socially constructed world that the copreneurs inhabit. The new act that they have constructed will form part of their edited script, written according to stories they tell to the scriptwriter, who then interprets them and presents this version to the audience.

Hamilton (2013b) suggests that we need to make an epistemological shift in how we use narrative analysis to enable us to understand gender identities in entrepreneurship. We must attempt to enter their lived world through the stories that they tell and the characters they manifest in their narratives as part of their sense making of their rewritten lives. This will enable critical evaluation of the dominant discourse on what constitutes entrepreneurial endeavour in 21st Century Western culture. Using IPA to interpret the detailed narratives of the participants enabled a more in-depth analysis of the shared goals and way in which gender plays a role in the formation of a copreneurial character.

7.2 Copreneurial character formation: Creating the theatrical duologue

This chapter draws on a number of perspectives that have been influential in helping this researcher to understand the formation of the copreneurial character. There is consideration of the ideological dilemmas that copreneurs face when stepping into the patriarchal world of entrepreneurship through the work of McAdam and Marlow (2013) and emotion work as explored by Erickson (2005). This will offer insights into the continued struggle that copreneurs face, particularly women, to rewrite the roles that they perform in family business. Secondly, the work of Miller (1977) will provide an understanding of the part that relational practice has in our understanding of

gendered identities. It will enable us to explore the question of power through a different lens and allow us to consider how the copreneurs challenge the patriarchal perspective on entrepreneurship and family business.

7.3 Constructing copreneurial character

The creation of new characters within a copreneurial business as an ideological dilemma is explored in this chapter. The purpose of this interpretation is to contribute to an understanding of the complexities of the couple relationship through an important and transitionary period in their lives. It will shine a light on the continued subjugated position that women play in the discourse on entrepreneurship and expectation of the roles that they are playing in entrepreneurship.

Interpretation of the narratives highlights how the participants articulate the contradictory and complex nature of copreneurial business whereby the couples represent both the existing gender order and a more, relational, feminised performance that challenges the current discourse on entrepreneurship and family business as a patriarchal domain.

7.4 Performing in a copreneurial drama: Gender, power and relational practice

The narratives enable us to step into the intimate world of the couples to hear their reasons for choosing to rewrite their collective identities. This part of their story is often invisible to the audience who are not privy to the rehearsal from which the performance has grown, as we have seen in Chapter 6. The audience observe the characters once the rehearsal is complete, the costume and make-up chosen, the set created on stage and the production team are happy with the results. In anticipation of

this first night, there must be a point prior to this that the newly constructed script is opened, and the actors breathe life into the bodies of the evolving characters. The rehearsal period enables the actors to immerse themselves in the story and reach into the script to mould their performance in anticipation of the audience entering the theatre to participate in the birth of a new drama.

7.4.1 The first day of the rehearsal: Creating a space in which the actors can develop their duologue

The birth of a new play and the development of new characters is always an event mixed with heightened emotions. There is an element of nervousness as each actor is anxious over the part they are about to play and their ability to perform for their colleagues and the drama. If that script does not yet exist and the character develops through improvisation, then it relies on an ability to stand in the shoes of that person. For the couples who now find themselves having to create their new selves the narratives articulate how difficult and complex this process can be.

Once the director has finished explaining the premise to the actors and the deputy stage manager has read out the physical description of the scene the actors are now ready to take their first tentative step into the reconstruction of the intimate duologue. They will create the scenes between the protagonists that will weave the chore of the play as a whole. In this instance, it involves the rewriting of a collective, intimate identity to become copreneurs. This presents the audience with two performers who navigate their day-to-day lives through the intertwined public and private domains of work and home. Interpretation of the narratives provides insight into a world that contradicts our understanding of what it is to do paid work. We bear witness to a

working day that incorporates the domestic with business responsibilities to produce an interlinked life, particularly for the female players in the drama.

From day one, an actor begins the process of layering in the nuances of the character they will perform to the audience. The minutiae considered, from the way they should sound, walk or physically hold themselves, each process takes time and patience and a development of the protagonists involved. This incorporates the performers understanding of what it is to be a man or woman intimately linked to the other. Their worlds are socially constructed and based on gendered ideologies that present the audience with recognisably stereotypical characters. The copreneurial drama presents a number of interesting perspectives on the creation of a business by two intimately linked actors who have chosen to redesign their future together. The analysis of the narratives reveals how the couples articulate the backstage, intimate world of copreneurial life, where the researcher is the audience observing the rewriting of their intimate relationships. As seen in Chapter 6, the couples represent four distinct premise for the fourteen businesses (see Table 9, p.204).

Name	Copreneurial Structure	Four copreneurial premise (Chapter 6, p.167)
Eleanor and Sam: Skin Care Company	Joint venture	**The Lovers**
Deborah and Toby: Preserve Company	Joint venture	**The pillars of the temple**
Sasha and Tony: Theatre Company	Joint venture	**The pillars of the temple**
Alice and Mark: Brand Development	Joint venture	**The pillars of the temple**
Celia and David: The Vineyard	Joint venture	**Love amongst the ruins**
Janice and Walter: Craft Business	Joint venture	**Love amongst the ruins**
Gary and Nick: Executive training	Joint venture	**Love amongst the ruins**
Amanda and James: (C.W.T.) Company	Amanda entrepreneur, James the supportive spouse	**The corner stone**
Lynda and Roger: Packaging Company	Roger entrepreneur, Lynda supportive spouse	**The corner stone**
Tammy and Edward: (S.E.N.) Training	Edward entrepreneur, Tammy supportive spouse	**The corner stone**
Freya and Martin: Educational Psychologists	Martin entrepreneur, Freya supportive spouse	**The corner stone**
Pat and Will: The Dairy Farmers	Will entrepreneur, Pat supportive spouse	**The corner stone**
Verity and Chris: Car Maintenance	Chris entrepreneur, Verity supportive spouse	**The corner stone**
Jenny and Paul: Climbing Company	Paul entrepreneur, Jenny the supportive spouse	**The corner stone**

Table 9: Summary of the premise for the fourteen-copreneurial businesses from Chapter six

Table 9 provides a summary of the copreneurial businesses in this study drawing on the copreneurial premise. The next section will build on the findings in the previous Chapter 6 to explore the role that gender plays in the creation and development of the copreneurial characters.

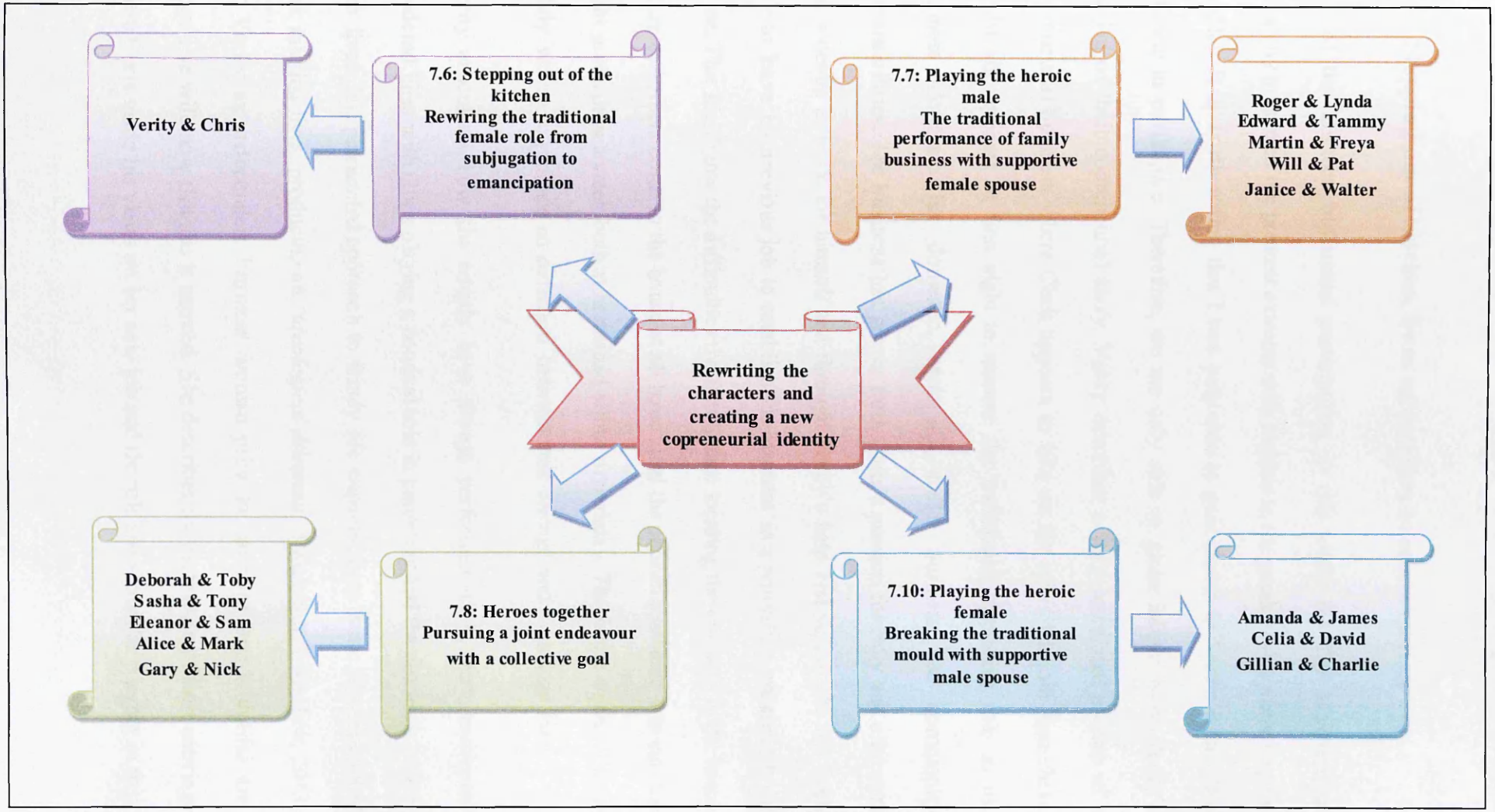
7.5 The kitchen sink drama: Understanding gender roles in a copreneurial relationship

Developing an ability to reconstruct life as part of an intimate married/co-habiting relationship is difficult even without the added complexity of becoming part of a copreneurial business. Erickson (2005: 339) suggests that:

> "[…] *the model of gender ideology posits an inverse relationship between traditional attitudes and an egalitarian division of family work".*

This she suggests continues to present us with a world in which women continue to do the bulk of the domestic and emotional labour. The literature review provides a framework within which to begin to understand and interpret the spousal gender dynamic as part of the copreneurial story. This chapter will explore the copreneurial experience through a performative, gender lens (Fig. 12, p.206) and illustrates how this thesis identified four main areas of interest contributing to an understanding of who the performers are in the copreneurial dramas and building on Chapter 6.

Figure 12: Identifying what role each partner plays in their copreneurial drama



7.6 Stepping out of kitchen, from subjugation to emancipation

Out of the fourteen businesses participating in this study the Car Maintenance company presented the greatest extreme with regards to the gender roles played by the couples. It is worth noting that I was only able to gain access to Verity with Chris refusing to participate. Therefore, we are only able to glean insight from Verity's version of their copreneurial story. Verity describes a very traditional picture of a copreneurial business where Chris appears to take on the role of heroic figurehead whilst she appears at first sight to assume the traditional supportive role in the business alongside her domestic, own sole trader business and community responsibilities. The business has grown from Chris's passion for rally and elite cars and a desire to work for himself and through Verity's help and support he has been able to leave his previous job to establish the business in a workshop underneath the home. This highlights the difficulties the family face locating the business in the home where customers come to the house at all hours, and the phones answered late into the night seven days a week both at home and whilst on holiday. The fabric of their day is tightly woven to produce no definition between their onstage and backstage lives.

Verity articulates how the couple have always performed along very traditional gendered lines with Chris playing a nominal role in parenting and the domestic side of their lives. His patriarchal approach to family life impacts upon home life throughout their married lives, producing an *"ideological dilemma"* (McAdam & Marlow, 2013) for Verity an independent business woman prior to marriage and a dutiful and supportive wife now that she is married. She describes the early days of their marriage where Chris made his views on her new job and the role she should be playing in their

married relationship very clear, pressurising her to leave her job discussed in Chapter 6 (p.169).

Verity expresses her dissatisfaction at the inequity between them and is resigned to the fact that this is the pattern of their marriage. There is a sense of sacrifice and loss in her in the character she is presenting, which points to a lack of shared power within the marital relationship for her:

> **Verity:** "Chris made me feel that my job was worth packing in and I felt fairly worthless".

After resigning from her job, Verity discovered that she was pregnant with the first of their three children and in an effort to maintain her career developed a company offering freelance consultancy to local firms. Verity acknowledges that she initially found it very difficult to turn her back on the autonomous character she had constructed prior to her marriage to Chris, which made it very difficult to let go once her first child was born:

> **Verity:** "...after I'd packed my job in with nowhere to go and nothing to do the firm that I had been doing some work with said can you spare us like a day a week? So I went and did some consultancy down there for one day a week. Again I set up as a Ltd Company to go and do that. Erm and then another firm said can you spare us a little bit, and yeh, I sort of set up on my own without really meaning to and just worked throughout my pregnancy until I had [1st daughter]. Intended to go back to work afterwards but I think I went down to Wigan, dropped her off at my Mums at half six in the morning, went off to Wigan for the day got to like seven o'clock at night and start setting off home and Mum would say [daughter] has gone to bed there's no point picking her up

> cause you're only dropping her off again tomorrow, so four days later hadn't seen [1st daughter] and thought, this isn't why I started a family and so that was when I packed in".

Verity articulated the continued dilemma that many women seem to identify where the women continue to take on the caretaker role enabling the male partner to achieve his goals at the cost of his spouse. Gatrell in her study (2008) suggests that this is a decision that is made by many middle class women from many walks-of-life and not singular to the copreneurial dynamic. However, this study highlights how such a critical event as marriage and having children can be the impetus for entrepreneurial endeavour for some women. What makes the copreneurial business different to other families in this context is the level of risk experienced by the copreneurs. They articulate how they have often chosen to risk all by investing their paid labour into one means of providing the family with a living income. The women articulate how, often their relational competency to balance the domestic alongside the business enables the business to function. Verity highlights how they achieve a good working relationship by maintaining Chris's autonomy:

> **Angela:** "Did you both chat about that?"
>
> **Verity:** "No we don't discuss things, we've always been incredibly independent, both of us…".

This added a layer of complexity to Chris's decision to start his own Car Maintenance business with Verity as a named director. Verity describes how she found herself involved with the set-up and administration side of the business developing a database and sourcing an accountant to be able to relate to Chris's particular requirements. She acknowledges that this was a difficult process having to deal with their inability to

make decisions without tension. There is something contradictory in the way that the Verity describes their separate working relationship. and yet they are negotiating a way of working together that enables Chris to direct the course of that relationship, he determines the terms of their contract. Nevertheless, they are indeed having to work together to maintain a viable business although this is not without its tensions:

> **Verity:** "Having the job sort of separate where he does the practical side and I do the paper work side works, works best, but you know occasionally we have to go down stairs and talk about something and one of us usually ends up storming out".

The narrative presents a stereotypical female performance within a family business dynamic (Cole, 1997; Danes & Olson, 2003; Hamilton, 2006; Jiminez, 2009; Marshack, 1993; McAdam & Marlow, 2013; Rowe & Hong, 2000) as a supportive wife, mother or daughter who manages the relational (Fletcher, 2001) and emotion work (Bird & Brush, 2002), performing back stage as the book-keeper, and caregiver (Danes & Olson, 2003: 56). It also draws attention to the broader debate within the literature that being in business with a family member will lead to conflict (Danes & Olson, 2003).

Verity is playing an important role in the business bringing her depth of knowledge in IT and business systems to enable Chris to maintain the practical aspects of the business. She is acting as the relational and business leader, striking a balance between the individual family needs and the requirements of their developing business. Verity is able to identify what Chris needs to enable him to maintain his practical role within the business. She maintains this role within a framework that

places the power firmly in Chris's hands perpetuating her subordinate role within their copreneurial drama:

> **Verity:** "I started looking at the business side of it and how we were going to operate, and looked initially for an accountant, really wanted somebody who speaks Chris's language because he's not the most articulate of people. He's not an academic, he's practical very, very good and an absolute perfectionist but doesn't like to read doesn't read particularly well...".

Gregory and Milner (2009: 10) suggest that, *"work-life boundaries"* are, *"gendered* and goes onto claim that they are also influenced by the actors *"socio/economic"* circumstances. Verity describes how they perform within ideologically stereotypical boundaries, influenced by their beliefs on the role that each spouse should play in their marriage. The couple have adapted to their need for autonomy within the marriage and business although it would seem from Verity's narrative that Chris has been able to achieve his goals whilst Verity has struggled. Verity describes how the relationship become far more complicated once the children arrived:

> **Verity:** "I am the primary carer of the children...When we broached the subject of children he said that's fine we can have children, but they're your children because he didn't particularly want children...".

Ideally, she would prefer him to have a greater role in their lives believing that they are missing-out-on a relationship with their father:

> **Verity:** "...he loves them dearly now don't get me wrong but it was very much my decision to have them so consequently they are my children, so I do

everything with the children which makes sometimes their relationship with their father quite difficult…".

Verity explains how she enacts relational competency to enable the intersection between work and home to function effectively. She is ensuring that her family is able to perform their roles within the drama, placing their needs above her own.

7.6.1 A desire to be valued as a colleague, wife and mother

Verity describes a very patriarchal household where Chris's needs take priority. She describes their business relationship as separate and transactional where they avoid discussion and conflict can be high:

> **Verity:** "...you know I have to go down stairs and discuss anomalies with him occasionally, which I try and avoid because it doesn't work. I don't think we could work together".

In this series of monologues Verity creates a drama in which she suggests that her capabilities are undervalued by Chris who has subjugated her position within their copreneurial lives:

> **Verity:** "I can't start work anyway until half past nine and I have to finish by three, I don't have a lot of time between those periods, I have to cook him lunch every day 'cause he has to have a cooked lunch".

She describes an environment whereby Chris exerts his patriarchal ideologies based on traditional stereotypical values over their newly constructed script and Verity describes how she challenges this position by developing a subversive life outside of their copreneurial script through her other business interests. She explains how she has

developed a network of contacts that have enabled her to develop her own business capabilities.

7.6.2 "The children know that dad always works": Being a hands on dad

In the next section, Verity articulates her great frustration that Chris is unable to acknowledge his responsibilities to the family driven by his passion for the business. He is often working seven days a week until late into the night, absolving himself of any role in their educational, emotional or domestic needs:

> **Verity:** "The workshops open seven days a week, he'll be down stairs six or seven Sunday morning and he'll quite often still be down there ten at night. The only time he stops is when he goes to the pub early doors, if he's had a particularly busy day, go to the pub and then be upstairs by eight in the evening".

The only time that he is able to relinquish his involvement with the business is when the family take a break away from their home environment and then:

> **Verity:** "The children just know that dad always works".

> **Verity:** "Which is why I love our holidays".

Verity acknowledges, Chris is able to concentrate on the children and she is able to have a break:

> **Angela:** "And you say that when your away it's a different kind of family what do you mean by that?"

> **Verity:** "We talk, especially in the caravan because we don't generally have a television and there's no Wi fi, there's no Xbox, there's no work shop…we do things as a family together, we go to the beach together, he because he can't sit still he likes to be busy he's always working when we go away on holiday he likes to do the shopping and all the cooking he does everything gets the beds up in the caravan at night, puts them away again in the morning. I get a proper holiday, I get a really good break".

This supports Hochschild's (2003: 9) argument that men juggle *"two spheres-job and children"* which in the Verity's case involves Chris's participation in the parenting and domestic work during their holidays.

Verity manages the domestic responsibilities and she observes that this disparity has only grown since the children were born and she relinquished a visible role in the public work force:

> **Verity:** "Erm I suppose because I gave up work the majority of the house side of things fell on me, whereas before that we both shared them very equally with us both working away. Chris used to cook just as much as I did..."

She is defensive of their business and domestic duties suggesting that Chris would perform a greater role in the domestic responsibilities if he had the time, unable to recognise her own substantial workload. Once again creating a garment of subordination to wear to create her copreneurial character with Chris:

> **Verity:** "...he certainly has no problems just getting the Hoover out and Hoovering [pause] he doesn't do that so much now because he works ridiculously long hours and consequently he come upstairs and doesn't have

> time or the inclination to do it but every now and again he'll come upstairs and tut at the state of the kitchen but he will get the things out and do it. So err he's very good like that...".

Verity is accepting of Chris's need to maintain a traditional routine to his day, which enables him to cultivate his autonomy within the household. The couple are ascribing to the traditional gender order of things with Verity taking on the full domestic responsibility for the household, thus demonstrating the ideological battle for Verity highlighted by McAdam & Marlow, (2013). This couple demonstrates a lack of collective identity formation (Danes & Jang, 2013) continuing to evolve their roles as individualised players in the family drama. The underlying narrative communicates a far more stereotypical picture of oppression and subjugation with Verity describing how she performs her role as a dutiful wife and mother:

> **Verity:** "... often he will pop to the pub early doors for a couple of drinks after work... just for an hour and then he'll come back and cook tea for me and him, I'll have fed the children earlier. And that's the only time he'll cook now when he's been to the pub and I don't want to have to cook two meals, and I'll then cook for the children and then I'll go back and do some paper work whilst he's cooking our tea".

The narrative highlights that maintaining the relational balance between the business and family unit achieved by Verity's consistent effort to balance their complicated lives. Miller (1977) suggests that men draw on women's relational ability to enhance the working environment. Chris is able to benefit from Verity's apparent willingness to manage the majority of both the domestic and business duties. She is able to play her ideological part, which fits neatly into the stereotypical script being performed by

over two thirds of working women in the UK currently. (European Social Survey, 2013: 8). The narrative highlights how Verity articulates a growing animosity between the couple, and she recognises that the couple now make very little time for each other:

Verity: "he doesn't want to spend just time with me on my own".

Verity describes Chris's drive to develop his business at the cost of nurturing the family ties with his wife and children for whom he is able to perform a limited role. This she explains has motivated Verity to cultivate outside interests, which enable her to receive acknowledgement of her capabilities both as a businesswoman and a good parent:

Verity: "It's not Chris that's boosted me. I've had to do that for myself…".

7.6.3 Developing a business portfolio

Verity articulates how it has been hard to be a 'stay at home mum' and throughout the growing family, she has been involved in various projects. She explains that it is important to her that her intellectual skills are valued seeking challenging projects outside of her relationship with Chris whom she believes is unable to understand or value her capabilities. Verity is growing her individual portfolio through her ski holiday company discussed in Chapter 6, the family business as well as continuing to be part of a number of community projects admitting that she has little time for anything else. Work plays a dominant part in both of their lives leaving them little time to grow their marital or parental relationship with the family or each other.

Verity continues to struggle with her position within the marital and business relationship with her husband, and suggests that Chris does not see her as legitimate

businesswoman and continues to expect her to make his bacon sandwich at coffee time and lunch for him each day:

> **Verity:** "...and I don't mind that but I do get quite frustrated with the 'can I have a brew, can I have a bacon sandwich', because I start work in the morning until half past nine and I have to finish by three. I don't have a lot of time between those periods and I have to cook him lunch each day 'cause he has to have a cooked lunch...a couple of times I've said I'm busy so he'll come up and make himself a coffee and I'm like where's mine I'm working too! And that's where we are at the moment where he's just starting to understand that I'm actually doing a job now I'm not just a house wife I didn't mind doing everything for him when I was just a house wife with hobbies".

Verity describes a world in which her feelings are relevant to those of her husband undermining her status within the family (Hochschild, 2003). This has been the impetus for her push against her copreneurial character developing her autonomy through her own entrepreneurial ideas. She is motivated to write a new premise for her life as a portfolio entrepreneur through the development of her ski business and interest in developing other projects discussed in Chapter 6 (p.228).

The couple are now at a stage where Chris is beginning to recognise that Verity is developing a number of projects that are making an impact on the family finances which she explains was , "turning over 85,000" for the ski business in 2012. She explains how she hopes that this will be the turning point for his acknowledgement that she is no longer just his wife with 'hobbies' which she explains is Chris's term for the work that she has done over the years since having their children. Verity suggests that Chris's opinion of her capabilities might be changing:

Angela: "Do you still feel undervalued?"

Verity: "No it's changing as time goes on because I'm making sure that I keep my skill set up".

This demonstrates that whilst Verity articulates how her status has changed with Chris, this continues to be on his terms. The narrative demonstrates that he hasn't had to change any of his behaviours to help to create their copreneurial characters. The story that Verity has told presents a couple who perpetuate an incongruent relationship where Chris wears the individualistic costume of the heroic male entrepreneur and Verity works between costumes. She has created various garments that suit the scene she inhabits ranging from autonomous businesswoman; relational copreneur; wife and mother.

7.7 Playing the heroic male on the business and domestic stage

Previous studies on copreneurs introduced in the literature review highlight how many couples continue to present a very traditional picture of family business with stereotypical family systems. This involves the heroic male figure and supportive female spouse (Baines & Wheelock, 1997; Fletcher, 2010; Hong; Jiminez, 2009; Marshack, 1994; Rowe & McAdam & Marlow, 2013). Interpretation of the narratives reveals that for a number of the couples there is a great disparity between the male and female roles presented to the audience.

7.7.1 Lynda and Roger from the Packaging Company

For a number of the copreneurs the men are simply going about their business as usual with limited involvement in the domestic side of their family lives. Lynda and Roger

describe how in the early days of the business when it was situated in their home that their roles were very stereotypical:

> **Roger:** "But err so it was quite a struggle moving from working at home to the office life, but as Lynda said there was, I felt that there was more, probably more pressure on Lynda. Although there was that scenario wasn't there, that there is a pressure on you working at home that Lynda would go, be going to work and she'd say 'oh well I've got a load of washing on can you hang that up ' you think well I've got better things to do with my time than hanging washing out' [laughs]. I'm supposed to be in an office environment and can't suddenly take time out to go and do that but, so I did struggle from that bit and you probably struggled with that bit because I'm there an why can't he go and do that. So it did become easier once you have separated the two with a bit of distance and you actually get in the car and drive somewhere so you're not there now".

This extract highlights how Roger articulates his ideological expectations of the roles that he believes each of them should perform. He explains that things became easier for him once he stopped working from home because he could no longer had to observe Lynda's domestic burden. Lynda performs the domestic alongside her busy working day demonstrating the dilemma that she battles with on a daily basis. She helps to maintain the stereotypical behaviours of a couple who own and manage a business together supporting Marshack's study (1994). It is easier for Lynda to come home at lunchtime and hang out the washing herself than challenge the daily performance of their domestic and working lives:

> **Lynda:** "To be honest with you towards the end I was coming home at lunch

time… it wasn't any major issue... I don't think it was…"

Roger: "No I, well, I felt there's some things that I'm stronger at and some I'm weaker at so the things I'm stronger at I try and go hundred and ten hundred twenty percent to then make up for the weaknesses in other areas such as, well maybe the strengths will be, I'm quite happy to do the cooking so I'll quickly dash into that start food off and get that all going err .chopping wood, lighting the fires".

Analysis of narratives shows that many of the couples articulate how they continue to propagate a gendered division of work and home (Freedman, 2002) with the women providing the main labour for this third relational sphere where their two worlds collide. Lynda describes how she carried the main burden for their domestic lives in the early days of the business when the children were small but this has changed to some extent over time. This draws attention to the fact that the relational aspects of the copreneurial businesses may change over time.

7.7.2 Tammy and Edward from S.E.N. Training

Tammy acknowledges that things were very difficult for her in the early days but that her role within the business has grown as the children have grown older. The couple identify their differing views on the complexities of running a business from home and having to manage the domestic around this.

Tammy: "But it's, it's quite hard to get used to though".

Edward: "Is it?"

Tammy: "I think so because when the kids were little and I still took them to school and I suppose in a way that was my equivalent of somebody's ride to work. It's that transition time between home and work".

Tammy: "...but it's that kind of transition time I think when you work for yourself is quite hard".

Tammy describes how she has redesigned her psychological garments to fit her new copreneurial character, and is experiencing a period of personal transition adjusting to her new and less public working scene. She describes the physical action of driving the children to school as her cue to inhabit her business script at home. This highlights the complex world constructed by Tammy and Edwards that challenges the socially accepted norms for what constitutes the public domain. For many of the women in the copreneurial dynamic this constitutes a far more complicated set of additional difficulties to manage.

7.8 Freya and Martin the Educational Psychologists

Freya describes how she struggles to maintain her relational role in her family, at the cost of her own needs as a woman, business associate, wife, and family member:

Angela: "Do you find with work and having a business at home, how does that work with choosing when to stop work, how does that work at the moment for you?"

Freya: "I think we're both very different with that, because sometimes I have to kind of persuade you out of your book when there's family time, when we're like, we're gonna do something now, but because you know, because I

think you're just you. Saturday's you'll just be like in the book kind a like, can you shut it…"

Martin: "Well I think I, I find it hard to, although at first I found it hard to not be kind of, well it's the weekday or weekend now, I kind a just collapsed, …or at any time, it's work time".[laughs]

Freya: "Yes [laughs] I don't know if there is a strong line between it in the way that we do just kind of err, I have got a lot of work to do this week and I'll have to work rest of the weekend". "The kids and juggle all the things that we want to do err… and I suppose that some of it is …it takes away my choice so that I am not full time for the kids basically".

They are attempting to construct what it is to be a wife, mother, career person in contradiction to the acceptable social norms of the public and private. They are developing a third way of performing the public and the private whereby they pour everything into one mixing pot to produce a blend of the two. They describe how they are taking their everyday complicated lives and producing a homogenized, whole. Hochschild (1989: 9) suggests that women *"juggle three spheres-job children, and housework"* which this thesis argues, becomes a third relational sphere for those micro-businesses based at home. Here they place empathy, caregiving and enabling others at the heart of constructing their copreneurial lives. Freya and Martin differ from the other two businesses in that they still have young children to care for which reflects the general difficulties of all working parents with young children at home. They have simply added to this complexity through their decision to rewrite their lives a copreneurs working from home.

This reflects the findings of Hochschild (1989) who suggests that there is an "*incongruency between ideology and practice in marriage*" and she refers to the work carried out in the private domain as the "*second shift*". This study suggested that women continued to play the dominant relational and domestic roles in the home reflecting the lives of the performers in the copreneurial stories presented in this study. The narratives also reflect the findings of the most recent report from The European and Social Survey (2013) which states that, 70 percent of domestic work in the home is carried out by women in the UK.

Whilst the performers in the copreneurial stories articulate a desire to move closer towards their ideological goal of working together as equals in the business and home, the reality is far closer to the national reality. Interpretation of the narratives shows how many of the couples articulate a play where they perform an equal role. However, the drama that many of them describe continues to cast the man in the heroic role with the relationally competent wife at his side. This woman steps on to the stage and represents the socially constructed image of the perfect woman able to juggle all of the balls in the air without a single hair being out of place. Her complex role enables the heroic man to achieve his goals without having to change any of his previous behaviours in the relationship:

> **Tammy:** "I mean I still think that it's hard, to work and be a mother and run a, run your home as well".
>
> **Edward:** "Mm oh yeh I mean I think it's err, I've had in some ways I get, I get a different view because I moan about having to stay in hotels and having to eat in restaurants every night, that's one area we disagree on, is I'll come back and you'll say let's go out [laugh] no please anything but that and we have

different complaints don't we really about sort of you know the lifestyles that we have ".

Tammy: "Well I think it's, it's about getting that balance right isn't it and I think that's the hard thing…Victoria Beckham said the other day it was like juggling glass balls, and I thought you know I've heard the juggling balls thing and… but glass ones is really kind of, that's the key cause, it's if you drop one that's something catastrophic isn't it?"

7.9 Stepping onto the stage and becoming heroes together

The stories embedded in the transcripts are rich with tales of love and shared endeavours. Those performers, who attempt to move as one as though choreographing their shared dreams, demonstrate how difficult it can be to rewrite their spousal drama. For Sasha and Tony from the theatre company they are growing their business at the cost of their intimacy and family goals. Whilst weaving the fabric of the yearly working season there is very little room for the personal. Sasha's desire is to build a separate home on their land where they can have their own space away from the main body of the seasonal company. She fantasises about creating the next chapter in their intimate story by starting a family and which is becoming more urgent for her:

Sasha: "Yeh, I mean we don't have kids obviously".

Tony: "We don't, we probably don't have kids because of the business".

Sasha: "Yeh and there's probably part of me that would like to".

Tony: "But the stress and the strain and…"

Sasha: "It's just not happening".

Tony: "It just doesn't happening...and also you, it would be really difficult imagining how to do it with kids". [laugh]

Sasha: Well no but in a, in some ways I wouldn't wanna think of it like that because I think if it you know. I'm I've always been open to it but it's never happened because I think it's just not been the right time and I think it will be the right time at some point obviously in the next two years cause I think, and then it gets a bit too late".

Sasha is now in her early forties and describes how her performance is on a stage littered with ticking clocks where it's *"just not been the right time"* for her emotional desire to start a family. Tony joins her in the scene presenting a picture of ambivalence towards her growing desire to reconstruct the scene from an intimate couple to a family completed with the addition of a baby. Sasha is battling between her idealised picture of the natural progression of their relationship according to the socially constructed picture of marriage and stability, and her desire to be free to perform the role she loves as the creative director of a theatre company. Gilligan (1982: 17) highlights how society has developed a stereotypical perspective on the world which, *"relegates expressive capacities to women"* she describes an imbalanced world in which *"autonomy"* is favoured over relationship. Sasha is describing her battle between achieving her ambition for autonomy in achieving her professional goals and the desire to be a mother. She describes how her body will determine if she achieves her ideological goal to combine her career with motherhood. She articulate how she has two years left before it will be too late. This supports Maushart' s (2002:18) position on the dilemma's faced by women who become participant's in *"wifework"*.

This highlights the dilemma that a number of the women are battling with in this study as a woman performing within a traditional family infrastructure where the father is performing a role as master of the house. Verity from the Car Maintenance business presents the extreme phenomena in this study where her daily routine includes making sure Chris gets his cooked lunch each day. This highlights how she articulates her struggle for equality within her domestic and business domains with Chris (Kluwer, Heesink, & Van De Vliert, 1997; Nordenmark, 2002). For Jenny from the Climbing Company, she juggles small children with office duties at home keeping them out of Paul's way when he needs to work:

> **Jenny:** "I take e-mails through the day if I'm at home".
>
> **Paul:** "You can stay on top of it all I don't know how you do it".
>
> **Jenny:** "So I might I just keep popping in and out of the office cause it's only there, check e-mails, answer emails, try to get back to people".
>
> **Paul:** "I think that makes a massive difference".
>
> **Jenny:** "If anyone to phone I'll wait till the evening, if Pauls gone out to work then he phones them I occasionally phone people but not often, so Paul will be out and if he's not out then he wants to be in the office at some point in that day so I'll take the kids off somewhere".

The couples who are involved with bringing up young children present the most stereotypical behaviours in this study. The women are the main emotional/relational managers and attempt to juggle the daily business and domestic:

> **Tammy:** "Erm you know it's not that long ago that I found that actually I couldn't really work beyond three o'clock because you know, can I do this mum can I have this where's this err, you know, and that was really hard so now you know, sometimes they don't come from school until sort of four, half four you know, and actually that hour and a half makes a massive difference to your day, a massive difference".

Aldrich and Cliff (2003) highlight the importance of taking into account the life stages of a family in family business. They suggest that being able to understand the *"socio/historical"* roots of the founding of a family business will enable us to gain a deeper understanding of the *"founding strategies, processes and structures"* (p.590). The copreneurs in this study articulate how they are as concerned with the way in which they can blend the business and domestic, as they are with their ability to identify opportunities for innovation or growth.

Sasha and Tony express a desire to explore the complications of their personal relationship, and their concern over the lack of time given to their personal marital needs. Looking to the bigger picture to try to gain a sense of where the personal could fit. Tony is able to see the difficulties that manifest themselves in their lives but is ambivalent to Sasha's desire to make their partnership into a family:

> **Tony:** "Too late for me"
>
> **Sasha:** "Well too late for you any way Tony but I mean [laughing] as you keep telling me [laughing] you know I think you could survive without that really".

> **Tony:** "Yeh but I could, I, I often think that I could survive without anybody err, just because I think I can".

Eleanor and Sam walk onto the stage as one, having rewritten their intimacy to become content in their newly formed world. They are the only couple in the study who placed their relationship at the centre of their decision to become copreneurs. The business has merely been a vehicle to enable them to spend more time together:

> **Eleanor:** "what we sort of, really what we realise I think is that we have very complimentary skills…"

Celia presents a very different picture of her partnership with her husband. Their new adventure has left the couple struggling to remember why they chose to rewrite their lives as Vineyard owners in France. Celia admits she was captured by the dream to own a Vineyard taking little time to explore the reality of managing one:

> **Celia:** "it's more of a passion that made us to do it, so we've kind of bought our dream rather than a business".

Celia describes how the couple very quickly found their dream turning into a nightmare and left with no choice but for one of them to return to their previous career to supplement their income. She articulates how David commutes between the UK and France weekly, spending the weekends and holidays at the Vineyard in effect opting out of the copreneurial relationship. Celia did not disclose how they decided that David should be the one to return to his work in IT leaving her to juggle the business and their family alone during the week:

> **Celia:** …so that was three years after we'd got here not a penny in income over three years and enormous expense to get everything up and running, so

> David ended up having to go back to work, and he started going back and he, cause he's in IT you get a contract erm and he went back just for erm what did he go back, he kind of went back in mid-February and came back here in August, so two you know it wasn't, he was, about six months to start with and gradually it's got worse and worse and worse until he's there all the time now… so that makes life quite difficult really".

This infers that the couple were choosing to perform a stereotypical domestic story based on socially constructed norms of a care giving woman and autonomous man (Blaisure & Allen, 1995; McAdam & Marlow, 2013). Celia expresses her feelings of deep disappointment at how things have worked out for them so far, whereby she is not only playing the traditional role of a wife and mother but has now added a further layer of burden taking on the day to day management of their business:

> **Celia:** "David[s] not here I can't go anywhere. Then he's here at weekends so he won't want me to go away because we haven't seen each other so, so, I'm, then December, January, February's all right because the winery work calms down, you'll then, but that's when you'll be working in the Vineyard. That's when we've got sixty, seventy man days in the Vineyard to do, so obviously I've got that to do during the day, but it doesn't matter whether I do it today or tomorrow so that's when I can, we can have a holiday, or I can go and visit my children in England, or something err and then you're back to err, well towards the end of March everything starts to grow and the you've got constant work in the Vineyard, and again every day, and because it's growing it's not like in the winter when we're pruning you can say well, I'll do it tomorrow, or the next day or the, or the next week, when it starts growing you've got to go out and attack it instantly so the period in which, it's because I'm on my own you

> know if I had like, I said the French, the French err people have aunts and uncles, and cousins, and brothers and sisters or whatever all around".

Celia articulates how she stands on her stage as a lone figure worn down by the fight she is having between the desire to succeed and the need to resolve her family difficulties. Her story is one of the broader struggle for women who play a key role in the public face of work, and her personal desire to maintain her private roles as both mother and wife. No reference is made in her narrative to the fact that David has had to change very little with regards to his domestic responsibilities. Gupta *et al.,* (2009: 398) in their research on gender and propensity to become an entrepreneur suggest that researchers :

> *"...contend that men and women's preferences are a reflection of their knowledge about gender related characteristics associated with the task (gender-role stereotypes) as well as their identification with masculine and feminine characteristics (gender identification)".*

For Celia this involves becoming part of a contradictory play where she wears both the costume of the supportive wife and mother whilst concurrently quick changing into her entrepreneurial garments. She articulates how the family need to find a better way to balance their time hungry worlds to maintain their family relationships.

Eleanor and Sam present the audience with a very different play, one in which they are succeeding in rewriting their lives to produce a relational way of performing home and work. They articulate how they continue to grow their business whilst maintaining their core start-up values of being able to balance their backstage lives with their busy front of house. They explain how continue to share the responsibility in both domains equally, continuing to grow the company on this basis. They maintain a bespoke

quality and continue to avoid expanding in a way that will compromise the premise of their story. They have attracted interest from large retailers, but believe that such a relationship would compromise their core relational values:

Eleanor: "… we don't, it's never been, as I say, we worked out how much we need to make to live, and really once we hit that figure that's it we're not we're really not that kind of concerned about you know doing more than that you know really we're not".

Sam: "No".

Eleanor: "So the Boots thing".

Sam: "So I mean, you know, we obviously are pleased and we've got to think in terms of maybe pushing our sights up".

Eleanor: "We still have, we still have targets".

Sam: "Yeh we've got to push our sites higher but we've got to be basically careful that we don't, we don't say yes to something that effectively we couldn't. I mean there's no point saying yes to something that err currently we couldn't…"

Eleanor: "Service".

Sam: "Service, because then all you do is, you lose that account and you get yourself a bad reputation err, when we have a good reputation for delivering".

Eleanor: "Yes".

Sam: "What we promised so we want to maintain that".

> **Eleanor:** "...most of our accounts actually are hotels, we have a few shops but most of them are hotels and B&B's and we you know we, it's great, we love that we know most of them, we talk to them on the phone you know and we, or we, if they're in [Region] we deliver to them and you kind a build up a really nice personal relationship, family and we, that's part of the business that we love, talking, you know seeing how good, how well they're doing".

Eleanor and Sam have created their new script according to their desire to maintain control over their working and personal lives. Growing good relationships with the other characters in their drama is at the heart of their desire to grow their business on their own terms. This is an important point replicated in all of the copreneurial stories in this study.

Deborah from the Preserve Company:

> **Deborah:** "... we should be able to all work together as human beings at a same level and I strive to try and do that it's not always easy because other people y' know they, they, do sometimes feel that they want to have this, of being a manager and having people that they can delegate to but I think you can delegate to people without it having to be, making them feel subservient to you".

Nick from Executive Training:

> **Nick:** "...we loved working with the teachers and we did a lot of work around err, whole school teams looking at them just raising the question 'what does creativity mean to us and what's creative learning and what's creative teaching...".

Lynda and Roger from the Packaging Company:

Lynda: "...we do have a large amount of repeat business so we, that, it proves that what we're doing is right".

Roger: "But you could probably make a lot more money by being nasty, but then do we want to be nasty, we're not nasty people ourselves we, we, struggle with that concept I think, we prefer to make less money and do it right, and be honourable and be able to sleep nights".

Tammy and Edward from (S.E.N.) Training

Tammy: "And also I'd have to be able, [laughing] hard getting my products out on time. ...think people like us and our products because we're nice about it and when we send the sacks out you know they always get a sweetie". [Laughing]

Edward: "Yeh".

Tammy: "And it just happens to be whatever is on offer at Morrison's at the time when I do my shopping. You know I sent out, we did a big job for a lady in Milton Keynes and she, we did a swap with some of her stuff and I sent one out with a drumstick lolly in and she actually emailed me to say thank you for the lolly and I thought you know that's something so simple, such a big impact on people, she'll remember that".

Edward: "Absolutely".

How the couples achieve relational competency is articulated with varying degrees of success in their narratives. Eleanor and Sam describe how sound business practices

and a realistic view on their shared goals continue to enable them to grow at a pace acceptable to them. They narrate all the traits of a lifestyle business whereby they articulate a desire to have enough rather than trade for large profits. Their business is not merely a hobby but something that is beginning to demonstrate a healthy growth. The difference is that the couple continue to place their relational goals at the heart of their business strategy. This would indicate relational competency in the businesses development and growth. A strategy that they articulate has been successful for the couple so far:

> **Eleanor:** "We think it's important that people come into work and enjoy what they do".
>
> **Sam:** "And learn".
>
> **Eleanor:** "And get satisfaction from it".
>
> **Sam:** "And learn".
>
> **Eleanor:** "And we pay more than the minimum wage".
>
> **Sam:** "Yea".
>
> **Eleanor:** "Because it's kind a we've always believed that it's partly about you, you, that's something you know, that you're getting a fair wage for what you're doing and that you're enjoying your job and you feel that your developing and making a contribution and that's the way we've always felt...the people in our teams you know that we wanted to develop them and help them to develop their skill s, and that was like a very important part of work it's not about just turning up you know it's about that you know, it's a

two way thing and that isn't always the way people feel about people doing jobs".

Sam: "...we have year on year on increased our turnover and we are on track to do the same again this year, and just come to the end of quarter one and we're already up on quarter one of last year, so we basically see that we, we're going to try and we'll all move up, get more accounts probably more prestigious accounts, larger accounts and then potentially move to slightly larger premises but we're going to get to a point whereby we have to make a decision as to where we go because there will be a certain ceiling whereby the whole aspect of hand making the products becomes very difficult, at that point we will have to have a real long discussion, because the whole point about business is based around the fact that this is quality hand-made product..."

Maintaining a connection to their start-up goals of building on their loving marriage and desire to build good relationships with their staff and clients remains central to their life strategy. Many of the copreneurs in this study articulate the desire to develop a business embedded in their relational aspirations. Making a difference and contributing to their social infrastructure is important to a number of the businesses However, unlike the general consensus on lifestyle businesses as discussed in Chapter 2 (Fletcher, 2010), this does not deter the businesses from having aspirations for growth.

7.10 Playing the heroic female and becoming an entrepreneurial equal to their male spouse

Current research on copreneurial business where the woman is acting as the main protagonist is rare. The McAdam and Marlow (2013) study highlights the dilemma faced by the woman in this dynamic. This thesis supports in part the findings of their case study, highlighting a patriarchal male spouse who undermines his wife, however it also shows how two out of the three participant businesses in this section articulate a different more relational approach.

Amanda and James the C.W.T. Company, present the audience with a contradictory set of characters. They have reached a stage in their lives where their young family has grown up and left home, James explains how he has taken early retirement from a bank, and Amanda is hungry for a new challenge. They reflect a very different dynamic where James plays an equal and often equally relationally competent. He articulates how he is happy to play a supporting role in their new drama. Amanda describes how she is rewriting her life as the leading lady in a predominantly masculine world of chemical water treatment. James expresses an understanding of the desire for Amanda to recreate her future as an entrepreneur:

> **James:** "I knew she was unhappy at work, she went out to meet her friends, came home one night and said I want you to come, they're at the hotel down the road, I want you to come back and talk to them tomorrow. So err, and so at that stage I went with an open mind. Well I don't know, I don't know these people. Amanda had obviously had known one of them for a long time and he err sold it very well actually, without painting a huge rosy picture. He sold, you know with a bit of hard work you know, with Amanda's sales hat on she

> could do very well, and obviously I, my role is the purse strings, err, it needed a bit of money to start it off with not a huge amount".

James also highlights in his narrative an interesting relational theme in this study of a supportive male spouse who acts as an enabler to his wife. The couple describe how they are choosing to share the power and aim to ensure that their partner achieves a true performance of the new character they have written, as a family member and business owner. For Lynda, Tammy and Alice they have found themselves working in a public environment that makes them unhappy. Each has been encouraged by their spouse to walk away from this negative environment and rewrite their lives as part of a copreneurial venture:

> **Roger:** "I didn't even envisage Lynda joining me in the business, that's the weird thing when I'd set the business up I was just setting up a business it …but that hadn't really crossed my mind. It was only when Lynda was doing the books and doing the HR bit and that role started growing up and then, then all of a sudden she was not very happy at school, I started saying well you know maybe you ought to come and join us in the business…".

Roger describes the more commonly understood perspective in the extant literature of the supportive wife who provides emotional support (Maushart, 2010) and spousal capital (Matzek *et al.,* 2010) during the early stages of the business, Edward and Tammy articulate a similar story:

> **Edward:** " I mean after leaving the full time job then you know you decided well that was it you were gonna help with the business and that was it you know".

Angela: Was there, what, what did that look like in terms of, did you sit round the table and talk about that?"

Tammy: No Edward said you're getting very stressed out leave work now, and went OK". [laughing]

For Alice she describes how working for somebody else was getting increasingly difficult for her and motivated by Marks desire to own his own business she felt that their business was meant to happen:

Alice: "I'd always wanted my own business".

Mark: "I always wanted my own business I was just biding my time getting enough experience to the point where I felt now I can legitimately set out on my own".

Alice: "Yes and I think, so I always think things happen for a reason and I, we met at work and then I left because you know it was too uncomfortable and I had, I then went up to work for a large advertising agency in London and I really didn't like it".

When Alice and Mark started their business Mark continued to work full time on other freelance projects to enable them to grow their business. He was able to support Alice's in her new role as an entrepreneur now able to gain the autonomy she had always desired.

7.11 Concluding Comments

This chapter considers the current hegemonic discourse on gender and power within copreneurial business and suggests that there is an alternative way of examining the

question. It draws on the premise put forward by Miller (1977), that people can share power with as opposed to power over, whereby power is interchangeable. This power is part of the new design that presents a blending of the back stage and front of house roles. This presents us with characters that perform "*...a set of actions upon other actions*" (Foucault 1954-1984 in Faubion. ed. 1994: 341), thus suggesting that for many couples power is not fixed but rather a dynamic force. For the couples whose lives we are examining, the question of power highlights the complexities of combining the intimacy of the relationships with the reality of managing the business and the domestic. It does however highlight the continued imbalance of the spousal roles confirming Miller's (1977) proposition that women are the relationally competent actors even when a couple perceives themselves as equal. In contrast to this, the narratives also highlight a change in relational management when the couples no longer have to consider the caregiving of young children.

This study challenges the current essentialist standpoint that privileges a masculine approach to entrepreneurship with women cast as 'the other'. It draws attention to the copreneurs relational approach to business that offers a different perspective on entrepreneurship. It draws on Goffman's (1990) dramaturgical theory to underpin the construction of the role that each participant plays and the environment that they inhabit, and Egri's (1960) approach to the construction of a play is used as the tool that has enabled this study to script the nuances from the narratives that help to create the characters presented. The narratives provide the pre-production detail that highlights the part that gender and power plays in the rewriting of the performers intimate lives to become copreneurs. It has demonstrated that we cannot simply adopt the mainstream position of constructing the copreneurial businesses based on a stereotypical view gleaned from the media and extant literature. This study highlights

the complex and contradictory stories of the experiences of performing as an entrepreneur in a copreneurial micro-business.

In this research, the copreneurial narratives suggest that far from performing their lives based on a patriarchal template, they are rewriting their lives as an entrepreneurial couple who are intimately connected. The business dream becomes the overriding driver for all but one of the couples, with the domestic playing a supporting role to the business. It exchanges intimacy for the desire to rewrite their lives as successful business owners. Goffman suggests that there is a drive for people to improve their social standing, which in this instance presents the audience with a group of characters motivated by the need to perform on a new entrepreneurial stage.

The audience are introduced to the ideological dilemma faced by the copreneurs as they struggle to perform within their socially constructed lives. Gender role presents a number of the women with their own dilemma, struggling to put the new costume on over their old, socially woven clothes. The dramaturgical conceptual framework reveals an insight into the scenes in which the actors move. They present an alternate viewpoint on the entrepreneurial life. The audience are witnessing the day-to-day struggles of the spouses who are reforming their lives as autonomous business owners. These roles are interwoven in an intricate relational ballet between the intimate and the public. Each movement represents the challenges facing the couples to find equality between the public and the private. The overriding story is one of continued imbalance of the gender roles of the couples supporting the current discourse on who should inhabit the public and private theatres of work and home. This becomes more complicated for those couples who have based their businesses at home.

This chapter has illustrated how the couples articulate that they are attempting to move closer to relational equality. However, interpretation of the narratives highlights how change is often directed by the women who interpret the relational script from which they build their new lives. Gilligan and Lyons (1983) in Belenky *et al.,* (1997: 8) suggest that *"responsibility orientation"* is more likely to occur with those who have a developed sense of relationship and connection to others. This chapter highlights how the women are managing to draw closer to their personal goals but continue to perform a stereotypical role within the marital/domestic relationship. For the men they are able to draw on their spouses' relational abilities to help form a new work/home domain that is closer to their shared start-up goals for their businesses.

Chapter 8

Chapter 8 – Creating the copreneurial script

8.1 Introduction

8.2 Act I: Creating a play in which the intimate characters can perform

8.3 Act II: Building the play around the spousal relationship transitions

8.4 Act III: What effect this script has on the intimate family relationship

8.5 Conclusion

Chapter 8 –Creating the copreneurial script

8.1 Introduction

> *"In families people experience the best of human relationships, such as long term ties, obligations, responsibilities, intimacy, love, and attentiveness. Moreover, the family is the only place people can find love and comfort in a capitalist society, because it is the only place where profit is not the bottom line".*
>
> (Elshtain, 1981: 427)

This idealized vision of family presented by Elshtain, (1993) is central to the copreneurial stories in this thesis. The couples articulate a relational approach to fulfilling their predominantly non-economic goals embedded in their intimate spousal relationship. The analysis of the narratives highlights how this idealized version of their new drama has been difficult to achieve, and often enmeshed in the gender roles that the participants are performing as explored in Chapter 7. The relationship has become a place where the domestic and the business have become homogenized to create a messy third space where the couples describe their struggle to attain their ideological goals for their newly constructed lives.

Chapter 8 contributes to the debate by asking a fundamental question about whether a new paradigm needs to be developed within which we explore the spousal dynamic and relational approach to copreneurship. This will draw on gender perspective (Bird & Brush, 2002; Bruni *et al.,* 2005; Hamilton, 2006; 2013a) to create a more balanced consideration of the entrepreneurial experience. The extant literature discussed in the literature review, has explored a number of perspectives regarding family business and the entrepreneurial process, but failed to consider in any great detail the effect that

spousal gender identity has on the creation and growth of a venture as discussed in Chapter 7 (McAdam & Marlow, 2013).

In considering the part that the spousal relationship performs in the literature review in Chapter 3 Aldrich and Zimmer (1986: 6) suggest that:

> *"The embeddedness perspective argues that people are not atomized decision makers, but rather, are implemented in networks of social relations. Thus, individuals do not decide to start a business in a vacuum, instead they "consult and are subtly influenced by significant others in their environment".*

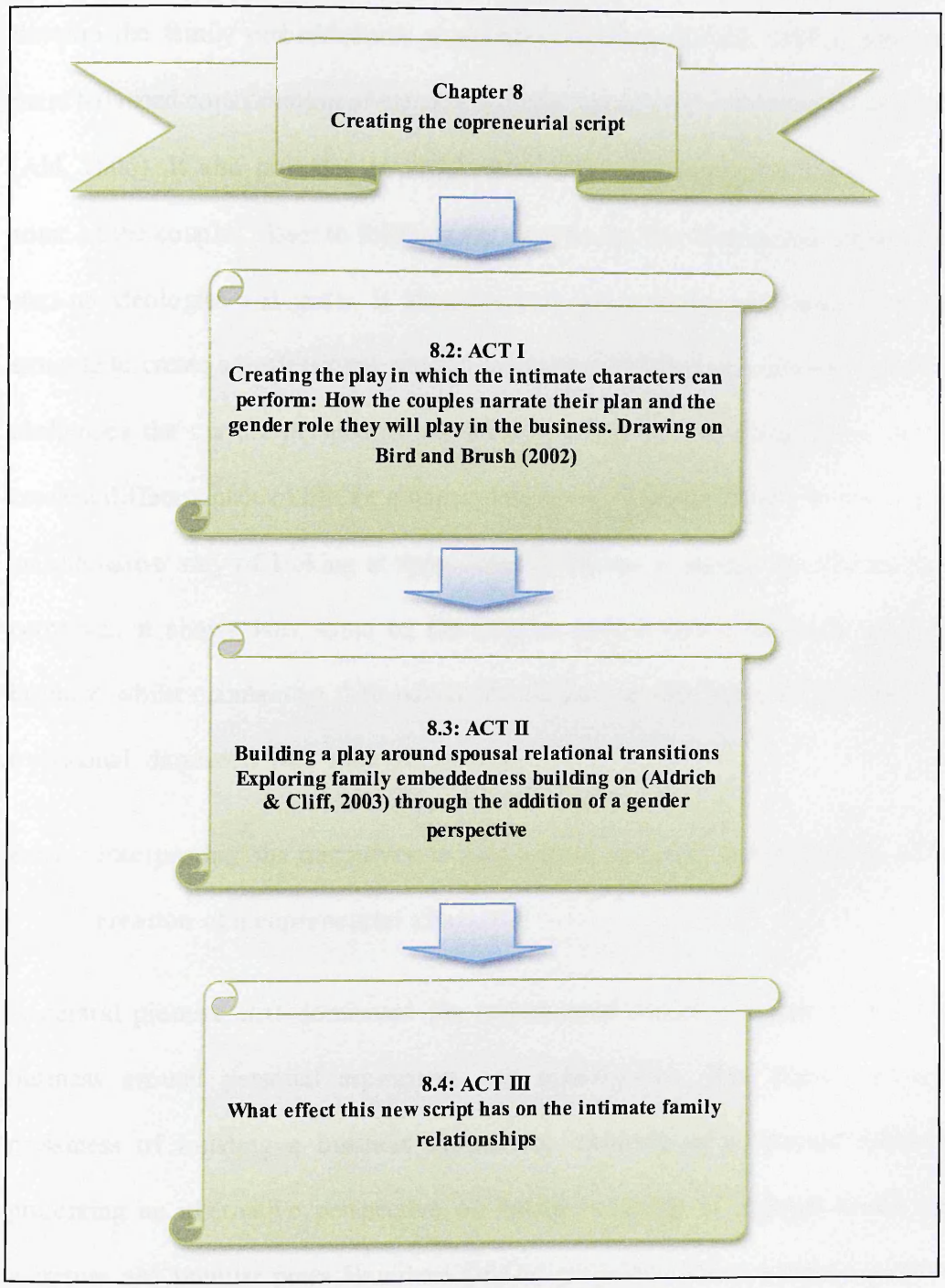
This thesis contributes to current debate in the entrepreneurship and family business literature by examining the copreneurial approach as a different form of relational entrepreneurship embedded in the gender role that each spouse performs. It has delved into the detail of the copreneurial stories to gain a greater understanding of the motivation that drives an intimately linked couple to choose to rewrite their lives. In Chapter 6, a dramaturgical approach explored the copreneurial experience through the analysis of the narratives starting with the premise or motivation for each couple choosing to inhabit their new copreneurial characters. Drawing on the work of Goffman (1990) to explore the dramaturgical perspective (Anderson, 200, Riessman, 2008) and using the work if Egri (1960) to construct a conceptual framework.

Chapter 7 invited us into the rehearsal room where the protagonists begin to take on the mantle of their newly formed lives described through the narratives. The researcher presents the findings, highlighting how the couples articulate how they perform within the ideological constraints of their gendered lives (McAdam and Marlow, 2013). A key finding of this research is that many of the couples describe an interchangeable world that blends the public and the private to create a third, relational

sphere. This is particularly true for the female performers who articulate the socially constructed, gendered world in which they live (Bird and Brush, 2002; Bruni *et al.,* 2005; Hamilton, 2006; 2013a). The researcher uses IPA (Smith *et al.,* 2009) to draw out the details of the narratives, to understand how the intimate couples improvise within this relational drama to redefine their roles as copreneurial characters. This forms the major contribution of the thesis by looking at copreneurship through a performative lens, gaining a more nuanced understanding of the copreneurial micro-business, as discussed in Chapter 5.

In Chapter 8, we have joined the rehearsal at a crucial stage when the dramas are coming together and the couples describe how they reconstruct their intimate and public lives to become copreneurs from their start-up stories. It will question the ideological argument that Elshtain (1993) poses, that profit is not the bottom line for the families participating in this study.

Figure 13: Structure of chapter 8



Chapter 8 (see Fig. 13, p.246) will use a relational perspective (Miller, 1977) to develop the family embeddedness perspective (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003), achieving a more balanced consideration of entrepreneurship through the addition of a gender lens (Ahl, 2006). It also provides an insight into those approaches that appear to move some of the couples closer to fulfilling the premise for their businesses based on their start-up ideologies and goals. It identifies how some of the participants describe a struggle to create a professional, profitable business based on a relational approach. It challenges the current perspective on lifestyle businesses, as driven by a desire to create a different pace of life for a nominal turnover, (Fletcher, 2010). It will introduce an alternative way of looking at approaches to entrepreneurship. By interpreting the narratives it shows how some of the couples have a strong desire to grow their business whilst maintaining their non-economic start-up ideologies and goals based on a relational dimension (see Table.10, p.250).

8.1.1 Interpreting the narratives to gain a more nuanced understanding of the creation of a copreneurial character

A central premise that dominated the copreneurial stories was one of building a business around personal aspirations and relationships. The stories reveal the messiness of building a business around the intimacy of a spousal relationship presenting an alternative perspective on entrepreneurship in contrast to the extant literature and popular press Hamilton (2013a) proposes: which adopts a patriarchal perspective. This chapter invites us to read part of the copreneurial scripts to illustrate how they use narrative as a tool to construct a new script for their lives based on a relational dimension. Riessman (2008: 9) suggests that:

> *"[...] story telling engages an audience in the experience of the narrator. Narratives invite us as listeners, readers and viewers to enter the perspective of the narrator".*

The narratives in this study have revealed the complex nature of owning and managing a business with an intimate other. This chapter will explore how the couples narrate an idealized story (Goffman, 1990) of entrepreneurship embedded in the spousal and family relationships. It will explore their contradictory stories to reveal how their day-to-day lives highlight how difficult it is to perform this idealized script. The dominant themes that emerged from the narratives were enmeshed in the messiness of the life transitions (Egri, 1960; Aldrich & Cliff, 2003; Fletcher, 2010) experienced by the couples. They articulate a convoluted route to copreneurship embedded in their descriptions of an intimate their intimate lives.

This section interprets the narratives from a gender perspective exploring a feminine approach (Bird & Brush, 2002) to copreneurial business. This proposes the adoption of a tripartite approach to present a new theoretical framework. This draws on the three theoretical perspectives discussed in this thesis of dramaturgy, gender and embeddedness to present a new way of considering the copreneurial experience. It seeks to understand how the participants articulate the embeddedness of intimacy within the reconstruction of their spousal characters to become copreneurs created through their historical recollections of their copreneurial story. This seeks to gain a more nuanced understanding of how copreneurs are able to perform within their newly constructed lives drawing on both *"traditional imperatives"* and *"more personal, existential and relational features of the feminine"* (Bird & Brush, 2002: 56). It seeks to answer the questions on spousal role and what part this plays in the construction of their new copreneurial drama.

This chapter highlights the importance of transitionary stages (Egri, 1960; Aldrich & Cliff, 2003) in the lives of the couples and the impact this has had on their ability to achieve their start-up ideologies and goals or. Aldrich and Cliff (2003: 590) ask:

> *"If families and businesses truly are inextricably intertwined as we have claimed, then not only should family systems affect business systems but the reverse should also hold...this logic of interdependency implies that venture creation processes-particularly the outcomes associated with these processes-are likely to contribute to changes in the characteristics of founders' family systems".*

This section will firstly examine the affect that a gender perspective has on the copreneurship by interpreting the narratives of a selection of the businesses, and secondly it will shine a light on the affect that the business has on family and spousal relationships through this gender lens.

8.1.2 What part does the spousal character play in the copreneurial script

A key theme and major contribution of this thesis emerged from the narratives identifying a lack of planning or role structure by the spouses prior to start-up. The majority of spouses approached the businesses using relational dimensions (see Table 10, p.250) attributed to the structure of an organization and described as "*interconnected rather than hierarchical*" (Bird & Brush, 2002: 52). The couples articulated how the business structure was often based on *"intuition and feelings"* supporting Bird and Brush (2002: 52) who suggest that this is *"existential rather than driven towards definable goals"*. They are creating their new script based on their established intimate characters, drawing on ideological and gendered structures created during the development of their intimate spousal relationship.

Creating the copreneurial script by drawing on relational dimensions embedded in the spousal ideologies		
CATEGORY	**RELATIONAL (Female)**	**AUTONOMOUS (Male)**
THE STRUCTURE OF THE PLAY: CAST SET & VENUE	Informal (Improvisation) Role not defined Transitional (Taking into account life course) Lifestyle business Home based	Formal (Scripted) Heroic male Each scene clearly planned and written down. Traditional Own or rent business premises
THE CHARACTERS: PIVOTAL ACTORS SUPPORTING ARTISTS	In connection with spouse and others. High commitment to enabling others to fulfil their potential. In connection with kin In connection with others	Target to achieve own goals Relationships transactional
CHARACTERSISTICS OF THE CHARACTERS	Share control Intuitive Equal partners Emotional Act on feelings	Personal control Financial control Dominant coalition of similar' s
INTEGRATION OF IDEOLOGIES through: Systems Culture Policy	Not about the profit Achieve well-being of spouse and family Aspire to achieve success of self and spouse in business and home Policies relational Existential no definable goals Accommodating	To achieve autonomy by creating own successful business Create a business to fulfil individual goals and ideologies Transactional Autonomous

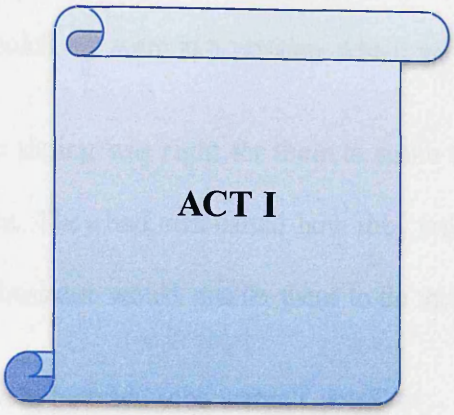
Table 10: Building on the Bird and Brush model (2002: 50) through a dramaturgical lens

8.2 Act I: Creating a play in which the intimate characters can perform

The next section draws on the interpretation of the narratives to create the first act of the copreneurial drama by exploring the copreneurial start-up stories. It explores how they articulate the creation of their roles within the business and domestic domains (see Table. 11, p.252). It highlights how the couples narrate an organic approach to the business structure where little or no planning occurred prior to the business starting, and shows the personal reasons for choosing to become part of a copreneurial micro-business.

Name	History of start-up	Personal reason to become a copreneur
Eleanor and Sam: Skin Care Company	Joint venture	**Eleanor and Sam}** Spend more time together and work in an area that they love
Deborah and Toby: Preserve Company	Joint venture	**Deborah and Toby}** Created a new business when other business failed due to an outbreak of foot and mouth.
Sasha and Tony: Theatre Company	Joint venture	**Sasha:** To create own shows and maintain artistic integrity **Tony:** To achieve Autonomy and maintain artistic integrity
Alice and Mark: Brand Development	Joint venture	**Alice:** Escape an unhappy job **Mark:** Always wanted to develop own business
Celia and David: The Vineyard	Joint venture	**Celia and David}** Create a business out of their shared passion for wine
Janice and Walter: Craft Business	Joint venture	**Janice:** To prove to her parents that she can succeed at something **Walter:** To create a business from his hobby
Gary and Nick: Executive training	Joint venture	**Gary and Nick}** Wish to use their theatrical training to train others in a business context.
Amanda and James: (C.W.T.) Company	Joint venture	**Amanda:** Frustrated at working for dysfunctional company and felt she could do better herself **James:** Wants to support Amanda's desire to start her own business
Lynda and Roger: Packaging Company	Lynda joined company after start-up	**Lynda:** Unhappy working in education so wants a new start **Roger:** Made redundant
Tammy and Edward: (S.E.N.) Training	Tammy joined company after start-up	**Tammy:** Unhappy working as speech therapist **Edward:** Desire for autonomy and greater working integrity
Freya and Martin: Educational Psychologists	Joint venture	**Freya:** To support Martin **Martin:** Made redundant
Pat and Will: The Dairy Farmers	Pat joined family business following marriage to Will	**Pat:** Became part of family business over time. **Will:** Joined family business
Verity and Chris: Car Maintenance	Joint venture	**Verity:** Provided IT expertise and business knowledge to Chris's dream business **Chris:** Made hobby into a business
Jenny and Paul: Climbing Company	Jenny joined business following marriage to Paul	**Jenny and Paul}** Turned passion for climbing into a business

Table 11: Reasons to become a copreneurial character



8.2.1 Scene I: Improvising to produce the script: Eleanor and Sam

Sam from the Skin Care Company described his and Eleanor's decision to go into business together as a "lifestyle change". They articulate how they had grown weary of the day-to-day commute to the city and expressed a desire to make a change that would enable them to spend more time together. They describe how they create their new characters as part of a transitionary stage in their lives (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003; Fletcher 2010), which is a theme that runs throughout this study.

8.2.2 Creating a new copreneurial script

The couple highlight a theme that emerged from an interpretation all of the narratives, of reaching a transitional point in their lives embedded in their individual, relational and non-economic goals and aspirations.

Eleanor articulates the reasons for her and Sam choosing to:

> **Eleanor:** "It was never actually about business or money for us you know I mean it was all about, we wanted to live in the [English county]…we got to a certain point in our lives and said we can carry on commuting to [City] for the

next ten years 'till out mortgage is paid, or we can actually, an just as things at that particular point, we were in a position where we could move…"

They highlight how the timing was right for them to make the change in the structure of their day-to day lives. They had articulated how they enjoy spending time together and running their own business would enable them to do this more:

Sam: "…you were between jobs weren't you?"

Sam: "You were a contractor I was a full time employee of the company an you were a …"

Eleanor: "Yea my contract I'd a been on a three year contract with Sam's company and the project I was working on was complete so the my contract ended yeh".

Eleanor also describes how the couple had reached a particular point in their family obligations that would enable them to create a new script for themselves:

Eleanor: "and I think the other things though were, Sam's dad had been in a nursing home normally you'd say well I've gotta stay because my children are still at school, or you know we would not have moved Sam's dad you know, because he was close to where we lived and we used to see a lot of him …those ties were, an my job had finished an it's, it was that combination a think".

Sam: "Yea".

Eleanor: "That said, well it's now or never cause next year you know we might think I'll be in another contract and we'll be back on that sort of ritual again".

Sam: "So yea things fell into place…"

They explain how they developed their new script around this important transitionary period in their lives (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). They were ready to create another chapter in their spousal history. Eleanor and Sam are able to identify an opportunity for change embedded in their intimate desire to fulfil their joint relational goals for this next stage in their spousal lives:

Eleanor: ".We'd made our decisions so we thought, we're gonna go and do it".

Sam: "Yea and this little café came up for, the lease came up for sale, and we had a look at it…"

Eleanor: "We were up for your birthday".

Sam: "Yea and we'd had a look at the café and then spent the time walking and talking about it didn't we? And then just had made the decision by the end of the week, yes we put a bid in for it and got it".

The couple construct a rich story of the birth of their copreneurial characters, embedded in personal memories of the moment when they chose to step onto a new entrepreneurial stage. They articulate a decision founded on a transition in their family drama where they no longer perform the role as caregivers. They are now free to instigate a fundamental change in their spousal script. They describe how they take

very little time to consider their move from project management into food retail. This decision is founded in their new script created around their future as a couple who are now free to perform within their new drama, devoid of dependents. They are building a mutual script embedded in their desire to create greater connection and commitment to each other in their working and intimate lives (Jordan *et al.,* 2004; Silverstein *et al.,* 2006). Danes and Jang (2013) highlight the importance of this shared cognition to construct the copreneurial character. Eleanor and Sam are taking on a feminine mantle that combines the threads of a relational- emotional fabric in contrast to the masculine garb more commonly worn in the extant literature.

8.2.3 Developing entrepreneurial aspirations and finding a role to play

Eleanor and Sam perform on a stage where they present a number of transitionary scenes around their developing copreneurial characters (Egri, 1960:192). Scene I involves their tentative steps into self-employment where they are not concerned with the business they commit to as long as they are working together. This exemplifies Goffman's (1990:45) suggestion that individuals often create idealized performances positioned within their desire to create a new status for themselves. In this instance, they articulate the *"feminine dimensions"* (Bird & Brush, 2002) to their decision explored in Chapter 5 (p.97).

Eleanor and Sam describe how they initially chose the business to enable them to move to the countryside and change their busy lifestyle to allow them to spend more time together. This idealized picture of their newly constructed relationship as business owners who are able to achieve a better lifestyle proved far more difficult to attain in reality for the couple as Eleanor explains:

> **Eleanor:** "...well we gave ourselves loads of pressure really because you know we were, we were mad busy, an you'd have these people queuing up at the counter erm, an if we were fully staffed it was fantastic you know, it was absolutely brilliant you'd get into like a rhythm with it an we'd be turning this food out an you know... people would be really enjoying it, but if you were one person down then you knew you were gonna have a nightmare day because you were always just catching up you know, you were just playing catch up for the whole time an when people were waiting for food you know the... you feel like your letting people down and it was just I mean, we were both used to working on projects, we were Project Managers an you know we were used to working to deadlines in our other job, but nothing compared us with the stress of actually working in the kitchen when you haven't got enough staff, an people are waiting for their food the we you know there's no comparison".

Eleanor articulates the continuation of her relational competency by showing concern over the well-being of their customers. She describes her desire to ensure that her customers are happy. The couple entered into business ownership with no prior experience or knowledge of food retail prior to purchasing the café. They describe how they had constructed an idealized picture of what business ownership would bring them motivated by a desire to change their lifestyle (Stafford & Tews, 2009). Eleanor articulates a story that adheres more closely to the early stages of family business described by Leach and Bogod (1999: 94), as a period of *chaos and exhilaration* whereby little research or planning has taken place.

The couple articulate a life story that has failed to take into account the complexities of setting up and managing a service industry business. Eleanor reflects on this early

part of their copreneurial lives as a time of great happiness and hard work where they were able to rely on family for support. She articulates how the supporting artists enter the scene and take tentative steps onto the stage with the leading actors. This creates an interwoven tale of intimacy and business where their improvised lives take shape. These artists form the kinship troop around which an embedded business grows. How they support or withhold their labour affects the copreneurs during new venture creation and beyond:

> **Eleanor:** "We would be on our feet from you know the time we got up in the morning and turned into the café till we, Sam lost loads of weight cos he just didn't get a chance to sit down an eat, in a café which is mad!...but you know we did have a laugh about it, and the half of my family came up in cars to help us you know when we were short staffed an things and it was hilarious an funny you know it was, cos my mum [laughs] sorry I'm digressing [laughs loudly] I was just gonna say that me mum was sort of in her seventies an she was like Mrs Overall sort of serving people you know that, it was like the two soups scenario, at times wasn't it, it was hilarious".

The narrative presents a scene in which Eleanor and Sam have created a dynamic and sometimes chaotic life in which family is central to the creation of the couple's new copreneurial characters. They step in to save the heroes who have found themselves in an unfamiliar environment and rely on their family to create some stability around the chaos, with amusing consequences for the couple. They move between their spousal and family scripts to create a new scene for their play embedded in this relational connection.

During this period of transition, they are offered a retail business next door to the café. After a short period of time, the couple describe how they decide to concentrate their efforts on the shop and sold their lease on the café. This enabled Eleanor to develop her interest in skin care products, born out of necessity, as she could no longer afford to buy her preferred brand, she describes how they put the needs of the business before personal comfort leading to her identifying a gap in the market for good quality, affordable skin care:

> **Eleanor:** "...we didn't have the sort of disposable income, we'd put all of our money into the business's so we couldn't go out and, but all the [brand name], or all the stuff that I use, to be able to use yea. I started making my own things and, erm, I'd hand them all out to people to try you know, but 'what do you think of this?' and erm we got sort of such great feedback. We had friends who had B&B's and hotels and they were saying you know 'We would love to use stuff like this in our bathrooms'...and we did sort of, in a small way start supplying people...and then, it became well,...so much demand that we couldn't actually keep up with making the products and running the shop and that was really when we decided that we would give the shop up and concentrate on building, we felt that there was a niche there for making really good quality products at affordable priced".

Eleanor built up interest for her products out of personal necessity and the personal connections that she had developed through their growing network of local businesses. The couple continue to create an interconnected script using we to refer to the development of Eleanor's innovative ideas for a new company, based on the changing goals for their copreneurial drama. They are growing their copreneurial characters in connection to each other (Jordan *et al.,* 2004; Miller, 1977), creating their new role

within their interconnected lives. They are combining the business founded in love (Nelton, 1986), and embedding *"economically orientated decisions"* (Fletcher, 2010: 454) within their fluid and relational lives.

8.2.4 It's good to have a plan: From improvisation to the first draft of the play

Eleanor and Sam articulate the transition they have made through their rehearsal period over time. They have improvised using many copreneurial garments and props that do not quite fit with their developing characters until they have found the closest fit to their original premise, to develop a business that would enable them to interweave the intimate spousal relationship with work (Cole & Johnson, 2007). Whilst initially this created a complex world in which their start-up ideologies and goals were difficult to achieve, they have experimented with the costume and make-up, set, and props until they recognize the reflection looking back at them in the mirror. They emphasise the importance of having a plan to create this new performance:

> **Eleanor:** "I think the other thing is that...you've gotta have a business plan...and that's part of having a business you know, you've gotta keep thinking, well where do I wanna get to, and how am I gonna get there...".

In the same way that not all performers step onto a stage without first understanding why they are there, Eleanor and Sam have worked hard to create the new theatre in which they now perform. They were one of only three businesses in this research that actually created a plan and role structure for their business only one of which was at the start-up phase, highlighted in (Tables 12-13, pp.261-262).

The Pivotal Characters (Copreneurs)	Prior Business Experience	What plan for business start-up including business role?	Achievement of Ideologies and goals	Role in Company
Eleanor and Sam **Skincare Company**	Owned a café and a gift shop.	Had plan for third business that they started.	The company is showing steady growth and Eleanor and Sam maintain a good personal life.	Co-directors.
Sasha and Tony **Theatre Company**	None.	Had plan for business at start-up phase.	Company attracting large clients and remains busy. Sasha able to maintain create integrity. Personal relationship suffers	Co-directors.
Janice and Walter **Craft Business**	None.	No business plan at start-up.	Company on the verge of folding due to Janice's mother threatening to withdraw her funding.	Joint ownership
Tammy and Edward **Special educational needs. Retail and training.**	None.	No business plan at start up created one after the business is established.	Couple creating enough income to provide for their needs. They struggle to maintain their personal relationship	Co-owners.
Celia and David **Vineyard owners**	None.	No business plan at start up.	Business breaking even but personal relationships have suffered.	Co-directors.
Deborah and Toby **Preserve Company**	Worked in a family business.	Had plan for business	Business showing steady growth and family managing to maintain a good personal life.	Co-directors.
Paul and Jenny **Climbing Company**	None	No business plan at start-up	Business showing steady growth and family effecting Jenny's participation in the business.	Co-directors.

Table 12: The Pivotal Characters and the part that they play in the drama (1 of 2)

The Pivotal Characters (Copreneurs)	Prior Business Ownership Experience	What plan for business start-up including business role?	Premise: Ideologies and goals	Role in Company
Nick and Gary **Executive Training**	None.	No business plan at start up.	Various health issues with both Nick and Gary has affected business. Have lost their house and investments but struggle on.	Co-directors.
Alice and Mark **Brand Development**	None.	No business plan at start up.	Company remained in start-up phase for the last 16 years	Co-directors.
Lynda and Roger **Packaging Company**	None.	Produced a life plan when Lynda joined the company officially several years after start-up	Company moving from a micro to a small business and making steady growth.	Roger sole trader Lynda performing a key role in company but not a named partner.
Fern and Simon **Chemical water treatment**	None.	No business plan at start up.	Business got off to a difficult start culminating in legal action, but now beginning to grow.	Co-Directors.
Verity and Chris **Car maintenance**	None.	No business plan at start-up.	Business ticking over and producing as much work as Chris is happy to do. Verity is developing her own business portfolio.	Co-Directors.
Pat and William **The Dairy Farmers (duration 130 years).**	William always been a farmer. Pat no prior experience	No business plan at start-up but part of an established family farm	Experienced family rift culminating in legal action and a breaking up of the farm.	Partners
Freya and Martin **Educational Psychologists**	None	No business plan at start although Freya did try to encourage Martin to create one	Business does not create enough income to sustain the need of the family. Freya does two other paid jobs alongside working with Martin in their company	Partners

Table 13: The Pivotal Characters and the part that they play in the drama (2 of 2)

Sam and Eleanor's story in Scene I depicts the messiness of start-up embedded in a relational approach to copreneurial business (Fletcher, 2001) and the transitions they have experienced to enable them to understand what it is they want for their copreneurial lives. They create a joint narrative that highlights the importance of role definition, planning and an understanding of the risk that entering into a joint venture entails:

> **Sam:** "...when we set out on this we actually, cos there's two of us running a business and we actually basically have to try and make enough money for us to live. Then we've always set out with the view that we were setting up a proper business this wasn't going to be something whereby you know every Saturday we'd pop along to a craft fair and show our wares, and you know it wasn't gonna be one that's done on the kitchen table although we started off very small".

Sam constructs the set and structure around which they will perform their copreneurial characters. He articulates a scene in which the audience will believe that they are a "proper business". In his description he appears to battle with the traditional view of business, embedded in a masculine concept of what a company should look like (Bird & Brush, 2002) and the lifestyle business they described in their idealized version of their new copreneurial life. Sam articulates that for him a home based craft business does not represent a true business, and he goes on to describe in very masculine terms their need to have realistic expectations of what the business can provide for them as a couple:

> **Sam:** "We always said I mean we're not looking to become a mega brand or anything like that, I mean, we've always said that it's not global domination

> we're after we just want make enough money to be able to live up here but we said we've gotta run this business in a proper way because it's gorra be a business that will support us hence we've moved from a small workshop to this larger workshop and at some point this may well become too small for us, may have to look elsewhere an we've already started putting some feelers out although it's only tentative but we have to think about how we push the business to the point where you know it is a proper business".
>
> **Eleanor:** "…yea it is giving us a living wage".

Eleanor responds relationally to Sam's rational description of what their business should become. They are illustrating the battle that many of the couples articulate in this study as having to create their new characters around their socialized selves as at odds with the entrepreneurial world in which they are trying to create their new performance. They describe a lifestyle business (Fletcher, 2010), but articulate a contradictory structure to the current discourse on such businesses that describes them as "*Mom and Pop*" (Nelton, 1986) businesses devoid of ambition for growth:

> **Sam:** "It's giving us the living wage and I mean that's always been a key thing so you know whereas we're, you know husband and wife running a business together we are trying to run it in the way that a you know a proper partnership a proper business would be run".

Sam articulates his struggle to believe that the audience will appreciate that they have created a legitimate business. He refers to their intimate status as a reason for the audience to disbelieve their business identity. He highlights that the size of their company is a determining factor in legitimizing their business status, and Eleanor accommodates Sam's point of view by agreeing that the company needs to provide

enough money to fulfil the new lifestyle that they have created for themselves. Sam describes his idealised vision of a legitimate business indicating that the identity of the owner and company size are key components. His describes his battle to believe that the audience will conceive them as legitimate without creating the trappings of a "proper business". He attempts to bring the audience back to their start-up story, founded in the relational desire to create a new lifestyle for themselves. The script that they have created stands in contrast to the current discourse on lifestyle businesses in the extant literature, which represents such businesses as risk averse and lacking in the ambition to grow (Fletcher, 2010) in line with the current understanding feminine approach to business creation. Eleanor and Sam are attempting to resolve the complexities of creating a business based on the intimacy of their shared goal to build a business around their relationship, and the understanding that to create this lifestyle the business has to provide enough income to maintain this new lifestyle.

8.2.5 Scene II: Finding the right plan for Tammy and Edward

Tammy and Edward from the S.E.N. Training, articulate their lack of business planning until prompted by a business adviser who performs the role of supporting artist in their drama a number of years after business start-up. He plays a momentary, but important role as a catalyst for change to the main characters. They articulate the importance of this character in prompting them to find a creative way to plan the day-to-day management of their business:

> **Edward:** "…we've never really had to resolve anything have we?"
>
> **Tammy:** "I think partly that's because we've actually sat down together and, when we did the plan. I think we both know where we're going and it's kind of like how we get there".

Edward: "Yeh, yeh, and we'd, I mean we've not done a sort of five year business plan really have we?"

Tammy: "No we haven't".

Edward: "We've had the accountant do something for us didn't we?"

Tammy: "Yeh".

The couple describe how they have distanced themselves from the traditional planning process by placing it in the hands of their supporting cast who in this instance is their accountant. They articulate how it is only when they start to access business training that they feel prompted to consider the need to put their plans for their company down on paper. Bird and Brush (2002) describe how a feminine approach to business creation "*includes less focussed and more diffuse concepts of venturing, marketing and organizing...*" (p.48). Tammy explains how the traditional business plan is not suitable for their copreneurial needs:

Tammy: "Well we did it, we did a visual one didn't we because the format that the guy from business link did gave was a traditional kind of paper document that you know write down …"

Edward: "The sort of one a bank manager would ask for".

Tammy: "…you would yeh, if you wanted money from the bank you would take this, and that didn't work for me, and I was saying to Edward if we're gonna actually sit down and work on this it's got to be something that's useful to us, not just because he's waving this carrot saying if you give me this business plan I'll give you the access to X, Y, and Z, so we actually did a

> visual one which is like a circle one, orbit I think it's called and we, you know there's no writing there's just like key words and that actually is quite helpful because it, it's kind of given us a clear idea of how easy it is to achieve what we want to achieve in the time frame that we've got and I mean quite quickly we went oh well that's gotta go back out here and that's gotta go back out here. But still it was like well actually the sixth months bit in the middle, what do we do tomorrow? And it's, that's when we sort of thought well actually that's the hundred day plan, that's you know something that we can look at".

Tammy highlights how taking the time to construct the plan has enabled the couple to focus on both their short term and long term goals. This highlights their different approach to business drawing on the copreneurial relational dimensions in (Table 10, p.251). They are strategic in their approach to their company, branching out into product development and retailing. They are articulating the professionalization of their company (Leach, 2007; Leach and Bogod, 1999), like Eleanor and Sam in the previous story enabling the company to move beyond its start-up phase. Tammy and Edward are however eager to emphasise that their approach to the business embedded in their desire to create their relational script:

> **Edward:** "But you know at the end of the day what we're trying to get is what we've always strived for, is a quality of life, err rather than wanting to have a big business, and big this and big that and big the other and actually in striving for a quality of life just sometimes you've, other things come along with it as well ya know".

The desire to achieve a balance between business and the domestic perpetuates throughout their narratives and the two businesses highlighted here are a rare example

in this study of how the couples articulate their transition from a business with no clear plan or strategy for development and growth, to a more focused and productive venture. They improvise their way through the creation of their new scripts. Each couple describes how they are able to do this whilst still maintaining their original premise for start-up, founded in a desire to change their lifestyle. They articulate each story as firmly embedded in their desire to put the spousal relationship at the centre of their rewritten script, striving to maintain their idealized starting point for their businesses. Bird and Brush (2002) refer to this as growing in gender maturity, whereby both the masculine and feminine dimensions to the entrepreneurial process integrated into the development of the business. This would appear to redefine what it is to create a lifestyle business embedded in both the relational feminine and the rational masculine dimensions. Both of these businesses represent the small number of participants who articulate that they are able to provide the lifestyle that they set out to construct for their new copreneurial lives.

8.2.6 Scene III: The perpetual improvisers: When there isn't a plan?

The majority of the businesses in this study reported that they made no plan for the business or the role that they would play in the new drama (Tables 12, 13, pp.261-262). They reported that the decision to go into business was founded in a personal desire to start their own business. The couples articulate emotional motivations such as following a passion or striving to achieve autonomy as discussed in Chapter 6. Many of the couples articulate the battle between personal and spousal motivations to start their own business and indicate that very little planning or role definition takes place prior to business start-up.

8.2.7 When one partner wants a plan and the other doesn't?

Freya performs a supporting role in the Educational Psychology business. She passionately believes in her ability to balance her working life with her children, although she describes the reality that appears to leave her very stressed over juggling her day-to-day life:

> **Freya:** "I think there is a frustration in there, cause I'm quite a fighter to get to have both, so I think even now you can see that, cause I do, I have you know three jobs three different jobs, and we're just juggling it, and we do whatever so I try to have both and something has to give at some point, so think he did err you did balance that out, but there was a frustration in me that I hadn't necessarily achieved what I wanted to achieve".

Freya articulates the complexities of the role that she performs within the household where she describes her struggle to fulfil her personal ambition to reach her working potential, and the tension between this and her domestic duties. She wears a stereotypical robe and describes her attempt to augment it with personal garb to bring her closer to the character she believes she should play.

Martin has a passion for going into educational institutions and training the staff to implement psychological approaches in their educational methods. He performs the role of heroic male (Hamilton, 2006) in the business and has very strong opinions over how work and home should be performed. Freya is responsible for organising the home and the needs of the children. Martin wishes to play a central part in the upbringing of the children, which currently involves a very traditional position of evening play, bedtime and limited childcare duties supporting the findings of Gatrell (2005). Martin describes how the business needs to be profitable to enable the family

to move forward and results in him having to deliver work that is not central of his dream:

> **Martin:** "...having our last child start school in September was massive wasn't it? Cause I think I hadn't realised how much his, I mean just realised that you have got the whole of our kids kind of trajectories mapped out, what they need doing where I quite blissfully just go and read a book an I don't [laughs] think about, not because I don't wanna think about it but just cause it, it, just not it doesn't seem to come up on my radar as much, but I think I am shifting ..."

Martin and Freya describe how they are striving to create a balance between their different approaches to the development of their new copreneurial characters. Martin describes an individualistic dimension to his reason to change direction, creating an impression of a patriarchal household. This highlights the complexities to the rewriting of their daily routine and to Freya's desire to ensure the well-being of the family, maintained by constructing a clear plan for their future:

> **Freya:** "...he just wanted to quit and that was the way he works that you were just like and I would want to, I don't mind taking risks but I want to map it out".
>
> **Martin:** "You were like what's it going to be like tomorrow and the day after the next day?"
>
> **Freya:** "an even if I, I, hold that lightly even if the plan that I made doesn't happen the way it is I'm hoping for things but it makes me feel happier that there's a plan, but with the business stuff with you know. there was the choice

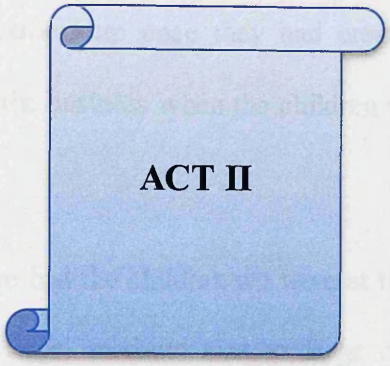
of the redundancy an you were just like, I'm, I want to go for it and I suppose that was what ..that was a big one that I was just like O.K. do you know what, I trust you with this … but at the same time, I suppose I think it was that whole thing of err I was just like, well how you gonna pay the bills after a couple of months?"

Martin: Hmm

Freya: " You know before you quit I was saying that, and you know like oh be fine, be fine, and I kind of was trying to tell myself to not think, I was right that I'm not sure that you month after you'd finished you were like well, not got enough money to pay the bills".

Freya highlights in this extract from their co-constructed script her desire to maintain family stability. Martin however, describes a more individualistic motivation. Throughout the interview, the couple articulate a complex drama constructed of contradictory perspectives presented by the characters battling between their own personal goals and their joint goals embedded in their family values. They are creating two separate scripts making a guest appearance in each other's show. In this extract, they present the audience with a scene of instability and highlight the growing concern of Freya for the well-being of the family structure. She indicates how they maintain trust through the construction of a single script written by Martin. They continue to try to improvise within a stereotypical framework. She also maintains that this structure may not be right, but the very act of creating one will make her feel more secure in Martin's decision to walk away from a stable job. Their narrative highlights the battle that many of the participants articulated of wanting to achieve the masculine approach

of autonomy (Bird and Brush, 2002; Larty, 2007), as well as a different way of performing entrepreneurship embedded in relationship and connection to others.



8.3 Act II: Building the play around the spousal relationship transitions

The copreneurial stories in Act 1 have revealed the messiness of creating a new plan that combines business with the intimacy of home. It highlights the articulation of a contradictory narrative from some of the couples reflecting the spousal dilemma to create a personal script for themselves embedded in a relational or autonomous approach (see Table. 10, p. 250) battling with the entrenched social constructs of their gendered lives as a married couple. It highlights the affects that creating a copreneurial character can have on the business and the achievement of their ideologies and goals. The next section will consider what happens to their ideological approach when children enter onto the stage

8.3.1 Scene I, What happens to the business when children come along?

Alice describes how they have created their script within an entrepreneurial premise prior to the marriage:

> **Alice:** "...one of Mark's friends said, 'Oh I can see you in business together' we met at work and we got we married within a year so it was all very quick

and then err, I'd always wanted my own business, and I think Martin…"

However, she articulates that she had not contemplated the difficulties of the transitions in their spousal relationship once they had created the business. Alice describes the pivotal point for the business when the children were born to complicate their original premise:

> **Alice:** "…so, before we had the children we were at the point where we were actually getting quite large, medium size to large companies but then we decided we wanted a family, and of course everything then goes phew, down because I'm not around".

Alice highlights the difficulties of performing the domestic alongside the business:

> **Alice:** "yea, it was literally just juggling like mad the whole time".
>
> **Angela:** "And how did that feel?"
>
> **Alice:** "Well it really stressful, really, really stressful but the thing is…"
>
> **Mark:** "Never been any different". [laughs]
>
> **Alice:** "It's never been any different and we have this dream, we knew that we had to keep going with the business and we didn't quite know sometimes where we were going with it but we knew that we had to stick on this path for some reason".
>
> **Mark:** "Because we enjoyed it at heart, sense of…"
>
> **Alice:** "We enjoyed it and we felt that we wanted it, we wanted our own business".

Alice and Mark are creating a relational garment around their copreneurial characters embedded in an emotional rather than a rational approach to creating their entrepreneurial script. Alice echoes Mark's perspective on their new script adding her own sense of their connection and personal ideologies. They are narrating their shared history as entrepreneurs embedded in a family system in keeping with the family embeddedness perspective (Aldrich and Cliff, 2003: Fletcher, 2010).

Smart (2007: 45) suggests that embeddedness, conceptually can lead family to see themselves as one part of a whole in their familial relationships where they can present a *"shared aptitude, aesthetic taste or sense of values"*. Alice and Mark articulate how they are creating their new script within these embedded dimensions' performing their new characters within an ideological framework. That is to say that they continue to use the family framework to guide their working practices.

Alice and Mark describe how they have found it difficult to develop a client portfolio that will provide a living income for the two of them now that they are unable to manage their larger clients, articulating the affect that this marital transition has had on the development of their business:

> **Alice:** "...the problem we had was how do you take all this knowledge of branding from two people and get it to the businesses that will pay, err, and you know, so all the time we were building up this portfolio of our own, all these brands that we've created and we were doing everything within that business, but it was too small, once you've finished the project, they..."
>
> **Mark:** "No".
>
> **Alice:** "...didn't have any money for anything else, there was no repeat

business so … we had a couple of bigger clients but all the work that we really needed to do, the branding work was real, you know it would come along an then that would we'd do it and then it would finish".

Angela: "How did that feel?"

Alice: "Well it was very frustrating and it was also very uncertain, cause you never knew when you were gonna get the next one, because you were forever having to start from scratch. It's extremely frustrating because they haven't got any money to pay you, or a little you know, it looked like to everybody we were just treading water and going backwards".

The couple describe the complexities of having to compromise their original ambition for their company to accommodate for their growing family cast. This has many parallels with dual earning couples (Adams *et al.,* 1996; Asher, 2011; Gatrell, 2011; Marshack, 1994). However, the key difference for the copreneurs is that they only have one source of income, so the risk is far greater for them when the income is low. How the business performs over time has a direct influence on the survival of their newly formed family script. They articulate how the addition of the new performers in their copreneurial play affects their ability to grow their company into a going concern:

Alice: "So we got to the point where you know the boys were at school, just about to start school, and you know up until that point it was just getting, getting through, getting to the point when we could actually start, things start to become clear, I could actually start to think without thinking nursery, school, ugh all the time…".

Mark: "You kind of see it really you know that, you've got to wait until the boys are actually, when they start school you know, that your gonna have between nine and three o'clock at least".

The couple articulate the pressures of rewriting their copreneurial script to accommodate for their family transitions as the boys begin to grow, and their dependency changes. They are not able to generate the income to enable them to pay for full time childcare, and their family capital in the form of parental support has been withdrawn. The couple describe a scene in which, when the curtain lifts to confront the audience with a chaotic scene:

Mark: "But when, when one, is starting school but the other ones still at nursery you know that they're only going…"

Alice: "It's part time".

Mark: "To be there for two or three hours, and you spend your whole time leaving the house and coming back".

Alice: "And we couldn't afford full time child care, not that we wanted it, so we were having to do all the child care really, an at that point our parents said 'well we, you know, we're too tired' so we were literally doing all the child care doing all the business, an just managing".

Angela: "What would that managing look like in a day?"

Alice: "Well it'd look like utter chaos to most people".

Mark: "O.K. to the outside world in that…"

Alice: "Yea it would look, we knew what we were doing".

Mark: "There was no pride in our house".

Alice: [laughs]

Mark: "You know it is a complete..."

Alice and Mark [together]: "Bombsight".

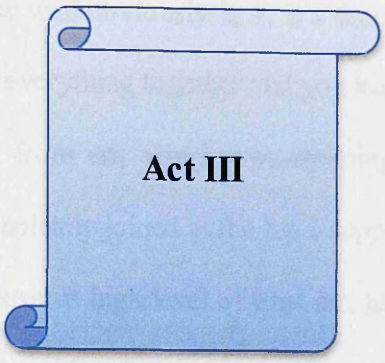
Alice: "You know, but it was like keep the children happy".

Mark: "But we know where everything is".

This is a common theme throughout the narratives as many of the couples articulate this transitionary period in their lives as the most difficult to juggle, particularly for the women.

Gilligan (1982:16) suggests that this subservience is embedded in women's *"social subordination"* and inclination to put the needs of others before their own.

The analysis highlights the ideological battle that the couples articulate (McAdam & Marlow, 2013), between their desire to be equal partners in the business and the domestic, and the reality, particularly for those who are managing dependent children alongside the business. Interpretation of the narratives shows that this stage in the copreneurial drama presents the characters in their most stereotypical costume, with the women demonstrating relational competency. This enables the male spouse to perform a supporting role relying on his spouse to manage the homogenizing of their business and domestic worlds as discussed in Chapter 7.



8.4 Act III: What effect the new copreneurial script has on the personal spousal and family relationships

A theme that stands out in this research is of the couple's motivation to become autonomous or separate from the main workforce through the creation of their own business venture. However, using the term autonomous is not without its problems when considering a feminist approach to copreneurship. Gilligan (1982: 17) suggests that the socially constructed concept of work creates an autonomous vision of work rather than one embedded in the *"the interdependence of love and care"*. In Act III the performers present various scenes that highlight the effect that the business has on the recreating of the spousal characters. It will draw on the analysis of the detailed narratives to help understand the affects that the business has had on creating the copreneurial scripts, and the influence the business has had on their intimate and family characters.

8.4.1 Scene I, Be careful what you wish for: The battle between autonomy and relational connection

Tony and Sascha from the Theatre Company, articulate the paradox of creating their autonomous drama whilst striving to create a parallel script of intimacy and love:

Tony: "Mm, you know well obviously it, it, it's fantastic in, on one level it's fantastic in that we do everything together and you know, a lot of people don't see their partners err, from err, you know, morning till night or whatever, whereas we, we're completely joined at the hip I suppose and because of that I think that we have a massive high level of trust err, in each other…but then of course the parallel to that, it's a fucking nightmare you know, and erm we end up talking about work and nothing else, we never have a holiday, we don't really go out, we erm just talk about work in bed asleep you know, we, and it takes the edge off the personal side of the relationship".

Sascha: "Totally".

Tony: "And, and I and that's the real down side of it that I think both of us hate".

Sascha: "Mm".

Tony: "You know I think professionally I think we're fantastic together, or can be fantastic together".

Sascha: "Yep".

Tony: "And erm like I say have ultimate trust which I think is, is crucial in erm putting on shows. I mean you know you go into the jungle together of a technical rehearsal nightmare together and Sasha's having the screaming ab dabs or I'm really knackered and everything's going horribly wrong or whatever [Sasha sniggers] and at least we know that we'll still have breakfast together".

Sascha: "Mm".

Tony: "Or get drunk together".

Sascha: "Yeh".

Tony: "And that's a good feeling I think".

Sascha and Tony perform a duologue from their script that describes their complex and contradictory copreneurial characters. They articulate their dualistic world in which the intimate impinges into the professional to create a third domain where they enact a relational approach to managing a business (Bird & Brush, 2002). They illustrate how the spousal relationship is in direct competition with their autonomous selves as business owners. They describe how their copreneurial characters are dominated by the business and admit that it even finds its way into their most intimate of domains, the bedroom.

Tony highlights the importance of trust between the couple to maintain their complex relationship. Sundaramurthy (2008: 98) suggests that trust is a *"critical source of competitive advantage for family firms",* but goes on to explain that if not managed well it can lead to conflict. For Tony and Sascha their narrative indicates that there is a potential for tension within their intimate scenes in the script if they do not find a way of creating a separation between the boardroom and the bedroom, which are currently the same place.

For the Dairy farmers, Pat describes how she is managing to create the space in which Will can maintain his autonomy. She articulates her difficulty in juggling her needs alongside her husband's dominant character:

> **Pat:** "...not saying it's a bed of roses all the time, do get conflict now and again, however I think you've really got to be understanding on both sides, you've got to give, there's a lot of give and take working in this industry".

Pat has developed her copreneurial character around her ability to manage the relational dimensions of marital and business roles that the couple play. She creates a script that is entrenched (Asher, 2011) in her relational third sphere where the intimate and the public collide. Pat describes how she endeavours to create a set on which her husband can perform his role free from tension and conflict:

> **Pat:** "Will doesn't like confrontation, from my point of view I do get frustrated because I am involved in the business but I also have a house to run and children to bring up...he doesn't get involved in the cooking or cleaning or anything like that ...he, I mean, he will, I think, there are time when suddenly you get to the point 'why am I doing all this?' you know, ...any average household isn't it where, I'm not to say it doesn't happen".

The business has served to create a dual identity for Pat as a stereotypical wife and mother (Marshack, 1994) and a visible and equal partner in the business (Hamilton, 2006). For Will he continues to present a constant, patriarchal figure to the audience perpetuated by Pats' collusion in the construction of their copreneurial script.

8.4.2 Scene II Creating a separate stage set where they can be a couple

Analysis of the narratives shows how the copreneurs articulate how difficult it is to make a separate time when they can nurture their intimate relationship. Deborah from the Preserve Company describes how they attempt to take time away from the business:

> **Deborah:** "...we really don't have a lot of contact with the business when we're away and they know that they can get in touch with us, I've got my iPhone, they can keep an eye on my emails and respond to things but I tend not to. We tend to be able to completely switch off, and we just had a week in Majorca in June and that was just lovely because you could just completely switch off knowing that unless there was a major emergency they wouldn't need to get in touch with us. They, did email us for something that only Toby could answer but it was something and nothing and it was immediately forgotten y' know… and we, really make a conscious effort not to talk about work, certainly not holiday, and not as much you know, trying not to do it too much at home".

Deborah describes a very similar scene to many of the participants in this study of an attempt to create some separation between the business and the personal; however, the description of their holiday creates a contradictory scene. Deborah explains that they take a break away from the business and yet remain in contact with the business at all times. They are unable to relinquish control to concentrate on their spousal characters back stage. Nelton (1986) suggests that they should maintain a healthy balance between business and the relational needs of the spouses and their families. The new copreneurial script has developed characters that render their spousal needs as secondary and invisible.

8.4.3 Scene III, Christmas is cancelled: Putting the needs of the business before the intimate relationship

Alice and Mark from the Brand Development Company explain how they prioritise the needs of the business before their own:

Alice: "...that's been the most difficult thing I think, to actually year after, year, after year, and we've had many Christmases where we've not, last Christmas we didn't buy each other a present".

Martin: "Didn't buy a present".

Alice: "And at Christmases we've said a pound you know, we've had to do all this, err it's been very hard".

Martin: "We needed a phone for the business so we said well that will be our Christmas present, so". [Laughs]

Alice: "That's our Christmas present yea...but it's, the problem is it's alright for you but when you've done it for year, after year, after year, after year".

Their duologue creates a picture of their combined world where the public and the private have become one. Whyley (1998) warns of the blurring of the lines between the finances of work and home for a small business, and suggests this places the owners in a precarious position should the business fail. Alice and Martin continue to plough their personal funds into their business fixated on the idealized belief that the business will be a success after sixteen years of remaining in the start-up scene. They have created two copreneurial characters unable to step off the stage to check that the scene is as it should be. They have not learned their lines well enough to progress the play to the final scene whereby the business delivers what the fantasy has promised:

Alice: "You know I mean I really believe that actually we are gonna have a big house, we are gonna have a nice car, we are gonna have all of that, but that is not why we're doing it, I thought that that will come, that will come".

Martin: "It's not the reason why we're doing it in the first place, we're doing it 'cause we enjoy doing it, we believe in what we're doing, you know, that was the quote you know err, If you find a job that you love doing you'll never work again". [Laughs]

Alice: "Yea I mean, I truly believe that we're gonna, we are gonna sell this out you know, I truly believe it".

Martin: "I think, I think it would be much harder work to have to say 'O.K. you win, we'll go off and do something, so what would you do?" [Laughs]

Bird and Brush (2002: 50) suggest that a *"the personalized version of the entrepreneur is likely to persist longer in a marginal business because it is personal to him/her"* Alice and Mark present the audience with a scene of two characters fixated on achieving their goals at all costs.

8.4.4 When the personal/emotional effects the ability to make good business decisions

The analysis revealed that four of the companies in this study present a similar drama to Alice and Martin, The Arts based trainers are already at the point where they have lost their home and savings to maintain the business façade. Nick describes how their fluid approach to business development has affected the business over the years:

Nick: "we never settle on anything, never exploit anything, we never you know, we could be probably one of the, best, biggest I don't know, we've never wanted to be big, but one of the best 'Presentations Skills Training Companies in the thing if we'd ever [laughs] just settled on that".

He is creating a script embedded in the relational dimensions (see Table 10, p.250

However, their personal story enmeshed in long-term illness described in Chapter 6 has led the couple to create their script within the confines of their daily personal lives where regular illness has affected their ability to build continuity into the scenes of their drama.

Each couple articulates the motivation to continue embedded in their emotional scripts and for Celia this manifests itself as stoicism:

> **Celia:** "...I mean in the first few years it was like you know, all full of enthusiasm and the rest of things you kind of, you want everybody in there and joining in, but when kind of reality hits and you realise that you're just going down this long work tunnel and everything else is just falling to one side then you know, yeh we've gotta sort something out we can't. So family, the family life has gotta come first somehow erm, I don't quite know how yet but erm it will, I'm sure one way or the other".

Celia describes how the initial scene of their copreneurial drama fulfilled the fantasy that they had created for themselves; however, the reality of financing and running a Vineyard has presented them with a very different script. The business has changed the way that they perform intimacy and family life.

8.4.5 Scene IV: When the business changes the family script

The next section will explore what affect the new copreneurial script has on the family characters. All of the participants in this study highlighted the changes that came about in their intimate lives due to the influence of the business scenes in their script. This section will firstly consider the benefits of creating a copreneurial script and how

some of the businesses have enabled the couples to achieve their start-up goals and ideologies creating a balanced lifestyle. The remainder of this section will highlight the complexities of performing a new copreneurial script, where combining the private scenes of their lives with the public scenes of the business creates tension for the couples, and an increased workload for some of the female participants.

8.4.6 Living the dream: Looking at the benefits of working from home

The analysis shows how the copreneurs articulate a number of benefits to creating a micro-business business with a spouse. For those who work from home they articulate an environment where they can be relaxed without having to put on a work costume or create a particular set for their clients to observe their copreneurial performance. A number of the copreneurs described how they write the scenes of their new copreneurial script within the existing set of their lives if their company is running from home. They illustrate how there is no need for complicated costume changes:

> **Nick:** "In terms of you know we will often go straight from bed in our pyjamas straight to work, and kind of you know I know there's all sorts of ideas around kind of get up and have a shower and, sometimes I need to do that and sometimes it's really important, I have different rituals at different times".

> **Celia:** "…you get out of bed and you're at work and I can sit here and do two hours' work early in the morning and I haven't even had a shower an I bet that's what everybody else does too?"

> **Edward:** "When you can walk out your bedroom and just go to work I mean jees I'm sure lots of people would just kill for that".

> **Roger:** "so when we set up the business I spent five years in a pair of slippers".

The copreneurs articulate how making a lifestyle change to create a copreneurial script supports Fitzgerald and Muske (2002) who claim that, copreneurs *"view the importance of work as a way of life"*. These extracts illustrate that recreating the intimate to become copreneurial characters enmeshed in the public and the private can enable the couples to create a new script embedded in the personal dimension described by Bird and Brush (2002).

8.4.7 When being a copreneurial micro-business is not all a bed of roses: When the family can come second to the business

Many of the women copreneurs with young children at the venture creation stage describe the complexities of juggling business and the domestic domains. Celia articulates the personal cost that buying the business has had on their marriage and family relationships reflecting the findings of Hamilton (2013b). This is particularly apparent in Celia's relationship with her daughter whom she admits is quite angry with them for her lost relationship with them particularly during her early years:

> **Celia:** "...very difficult, [daughter's] a little bit more understanding now, but when she was younger it was really very hard, cause I mean, you know you get people come and knock at the door and everything gets dropped and you have to do that, and she when she was younger, Mum, mum, sorry! You have to pop, you have to be there at the front you know at the front, customers everything's fine no problem, and behind the scenes you know you've got little one crying, or you've left a mess, or, and it's your own house and you can't lock the door at five o'clock and go away. I feel she's suffered actually

> cause we spend so little time with her, relatively, I mean now she's sixteen she's not too, too fussed, when she was younger it was quite hard for her really".

This extract highlights the reflections of many of the women in this study who create their script around their relationship with and to the supporting artists in their story and the guilt and anxiety of failing to get things right. (Hartling, Rosen, Walker & Jordan, 2004: 105) refer to such *"self-conscious reflections"* as embedded in the desire for us to reflect upon ourselves in relation to others.

8.4.8 Putting the children first

A recurring theme articulated by many of the copreneurs is the dilemma of having to choose between business demands, and their personal aspirations and care giving responsibilities. Jenny and Paul describe juggling the early days of their business and the birth of their children:

> **Angela:** "And would you say that there's a, there a time when you would say draw a line under work and home takes over?"
>
> **Jenny:** "No".
>
> **Paul:** "My perception of you is that you flip between the two somehow like, if I'm so, when you're out on the hill and I'm looking after the kids, I find it really difficult to try and do both I'm less good at multitasking".

Paul describes how he constructs Jenny's stereotypical role in their drama that underpins her socially constructed character as a, multi-tasking women who remains in the home to perform for her family.

Paul: "...so it's much better to just say right I'm just looking after the kids now do the kids and the office, I just can't and they're like trying to do both so dunno how you manage to actually like do both, cause stay on top of e-mails and do stuff for them...".

Jenny: "I just pop in and out of the office".

Paul: "Cause you flit between the two all the time don't you and then you'll cook dinner and then you'll flit back in the office, and then the client will ring and then you'll focus on that and then, so I guess in a way having the office in the home is a good and bad thing...".

In this duologue Jenny and Paul construct a scene where they are performing the *"natural domesticity of women"* (Oakley, 2005: 97) where Paul propagates the consensus that women are better equipped to perform in the domestic domain. Jenny also expresses her frustration that she is able to climb less now that the children have been born:

Jenny: "...Paul prefers to be on the hill more of the time than at home. You don't mind being with the kids but you don't want to do it too much?"

Paul: "No I think it would be, if I did it all the time, it's much more hard work being with the kids than it is being on the hill let's put it that way it's much more tiring [laughing] not that that's why I don't want to. I think it works better because you, you enjoy being with them don't you?"

Jenny: "Yeh, mostly" [Laughing].

Paul: "Mostly working hard at making them well".

> **Jenny:** "I miss being on the hill and I feel more inadequate at my job cause I'm trying to split my job between two things, but I still do bits and bobs cause I feel like it, because I've worked hard to get there so I don't wanna give up, and when they've gone back to school all of them might be able to do bits and pieces bit more dunno".

Jenny and Paul are performing in a drama highlighted by Marshack (1994) as stereotypical, whereby the woman performs her role to manage the status quo of the household. For Jenny managing the family's interlinked life has created limited opportunities for her in the short term. She describes a future scene for their copreneurial script in which the children are older and she will be free to climb again. This highlights a key finding of this thesis, that women draw on relational competency to help them to perform their copreneurial role in the majority of the businesses. It highlights how, as discussed in detail in Chapter 7, that such competency to interweave their business and domestic worlds benefits the micro-businesses, playing a visible part in the organizational structure. These relational dimensions create a new entrepreneurial script where the copreneurial characters put on new costumes. These garments are not constructed from rich and beautiful cloth but woven from mismatched threads.

8.4.9 Scene VI. When the relational leader manages the business and home

Significantly, many of the narratives highlight how the copreneurs articulate the relational performance of the female spouse, and how this benefitted their spouse and children. Deborah from the Preserve Company highlights how she manages the logistics of the family when her and Toby have to go away with business:

> **Deborah:** "So I guess it's just finding out who needs what, where and when

> and then, err, so quite often one of the girls will say to me, oh a need to be so and so somewhere tomorrow, and so I'll say, well when we're having dinner we'll talk about it because a don't know what dad's doing tomorrow he might be needing to go that direction. So usually that way we can work it out and plan. I quite like to be organised so I like to know that everybody knows where the supposed to be and things, so it's not, I mean I wouldn't go y' know, I don't write it all down or anything y' know not that, ...it's just sort of so I know, cause at the moment I'm putting lot of hours in so I can be here from eight in the morning till eight at night. So I just need to know that they are where they're supposed to be an not y' know that they' re not stranded somewhere...there's something all the time so I have calendars everywhere".

Deborah describes the development of her frenetic character embedded in the needs of her family and the business. She is performing her busy day working from eight until eight whilst juggling the family calendar. Deborah describes the set where the family characters perform with "calendars everywhere" she creates a vision of connection and maintenance of the family relationships alongside putting in a full day at the office as Toby's copreneurial equal.

Mark describes how the family and business would not be able to function without Alice organising their daily routines:

> **Mark:** "And Alice is brilliant when, with every property that we.ve moved to Alice has always said 'I've got to have a post box', in the road you know in the street and we've got to have a railway line within walking distance".
>
> **Alice:** [Laughs]

Mark: "So we don't have to drive there and that's been a dream wherever we've lived and when the boy's school became priority when we moved there we've got a school within walking distance".

Alice: "Nursery round the corner, school round the corner".

Mark: "So that makes life much easier".

Alice: "So everything is within five minutes so literally,...we were literally getting them in at ten to nine or nine o'clock then run home, and then between nine and twelve or nine and ten to twelve we would just bang, bang .bang, bang, bang, we were very organised, we had this list of absolutely essential things that we had to do".

Alice creates the structure of the script to enable the family to perform their roles within its public and private scenes. Chodorow (1979) suggests that:

"Women mediate between the social and cultural categories which men have defined; they bridge the gap and make transitions-especially in their role as socializer and mother-between nature and culture".

Mark describes how Alice has organized their copreneurial drama to maximise their ability to perform their business and their domestic roles as efficiently as possible. In the same way as Deborah has designed her family set around calendars to ensure that they forget nothing, also Alice creates a set that is geographically efficient with all of their needs met within the nearest distance possible.

8.4.10 Balancing the intimate with business and leaving work at the door: The complexities of running a business from home

This chapter has highlighted how the couples recreate their intimate scripts to accommodate for their new copreneurial characters, and the supporting artists that join them in the drama. The final section will highlight how the business serves to render the original spousal characters invisible in the new drama. The couples have described how they create scenes in which the business can grow and develop, and their children can become a visible and integrated part of the story. However, the majority of the couples described how their spousal relationship had very little opportunity to appear on stage as part of their copreneurial characters. Gary and Nick the Motivational trainers articulate how important it is to nurture their intimate relationship:

> **Nick:** just remembering how easy it is to, to, forget to take care of the relationship, and at the moment we've got this thing where we have no money, and so we can you know not do a lot of stuff err, but we also know that if we're gonna have really good quality conversations we often have to do it out of context of here right…"
>
> **Gary:** "Yea".
>
> **Nick:** "But you know often in the past if we've really needed to have good quality conversations we've gone to a restaurant".
>
> **Gary:** "And done it over lunch and things…"
>
> **Nick:** "…and we will always we'll, if we ever go you know, like yesterday we had a great day we talked to each other over a sandwich you know, and had a fantastic kind of conversation and money, never mind not having any money,

> we probably keep needing to do that, and I suppose the thing that I would say is we're very good at living in this house, I particularly, I won't leave the house for days on end and be perfectly happy, but in that I become more, and more tunnelled, and more and more kind of introverted".

Gary and Nick describe how they are attempting to incorporate their intimate characters into their copreneurial script. They create various sets in which they perform their continued connection to each other and highlight the importance of maintaining communication with each other. Gottman and Silver (2000: 189) stress the importance for couples of *"unwinding into your daily schedule"*. Nick articulates how their underlying money worries run through their daily script, and describes how the household set is oppressive and in danger of changing his performance.

A number of the couples highlighted the complexity of balancing their business and intimate relationship. Sasha from the Theatre Company articulates her frustration at Tony's commitment to the business at the cost of their marital relationship:

> **Sasha:** "I think that sometimes it's quite tough, I think you know because you there's work load, or the amount you know, not expectation, I'm not trying to say that you expect anything, but it's like because you're of the, you know, you work hard, you work hard, and I work hard…"
>
> **Tony:** [laughs]
>
> **Sasha:** "…and sometimes I don't want to work so hard and I just want take time out and, actually I don't feel that I can do that, and I'm, I'm the worst person to you know, I could totally beat myself up about it, but in a way it's also, the what we don't have is the sort of I don't know, we don't really, it's

not the relationship side there's not enough of that side. Like we don't go out for dinner we don't go out…"

Tony: [Laughs]

Sasha: "…we don't go out together you know and that that's lacking really from that kind, almost tenderness in a way like sort of nurturing that relationship, that doesn't exist [laughing]. If I was honest, cause there isn't any time which is terrible".

Sasha questions the script that the couple have created which does not fit with her idealized version of their story. She is describing her desire to perform in a more personal and relational drama where the intimate and the public have equal billing, whereas she describes Tony's more traditional approach which is embedded in the business. This monologue from Sasha creates a scene in stark contrast to the claims made by a number of studies that, entrepreneurial couples are able to be more flexible in their work and family practices (Barnett & Barnett, 1988; Jones & Jones, 2001; Krupa & Kirk-Kuwaye, 1987; Nelton, 1986). Brannon *et al.,* (2012: 112) suggest that, *"this coordination helps the couple create a healthy equilibrium between the work and family identities".* This enrichment of work and family is echoed by Greenhaus & Powell, (2006) who claim that entrepreneurial women are particular beneficiaries. What appears to be absent in these studies is the examination of the intimate relationship and the effect that self-employment has on the spousal characters. Many of the couples in this study highlighted that it was important to make time for the spousal relationship, however even those who managed to take time out for each other as a couple identified that they very rarely switched off the phone or let go of the business completely:

Tammy: "I was gonna say the only thing that we've become more aware of and we've worked a lot harder to do is to try and draw some lines between, you know when we discuss work and when we're off as it were…Do ya know what I mean?"

Edward: "I don't like to talk about work when we're not working".

Tammy: "No".

Edward: "You know, I won't, unless it's really, really urgent I won't talk about work if we're not working".

Tammy: "And I think we've got better at that though".

Edward: "We have yeh".

Angela: "Is there a sort of cut of time, do you get to a point in the day or is there a?"

Edward: "It's Friday, Friday generally isn't it? Friday night when we get up to the [Lake], or wherever that tends to be it. That tends to be, that's it unless there's something to discuss and then. We'll discuss it but err, but no generally its Friday night right?"

This chapter has highlighted that the couple put the needs of the business and their children before their own, contributing to the copreneurial discourse by showing that the business has a fundamental effect on their spousal characters when the couple decides to rewrite their intimate script to become copreneurs.

8.5 Discussion

This chapter has considered the way intimately linked characters perform within a copreneurial drama drawing on a tripartite approach, incorporating dramaturgical, gender and family embeddedness perspectives as a starting point to consider the role that each character will play in the copreneurial drama. A major contribution in this chapter argues that such a notion as family embeddedness cannot be considered without first examining how gender ideologies are created and performed in a copreneurial micro-business. It highlights the dilemmas faced by the couples in trying to manage the complexities of their socially constructed selves in their newly created script. There is a growing area of debate that argues that entrepreneurship cannot be considered in a balanced manner without the addition of a gender perspective (Bird and Brush, 2002; Bruni *et al.,* 2004; Ahl, 2006; Bruni *et al.* 2008; Bensemann & Hall, 2010). This chapter has set out to contribute to this debate by developing an interpretative framework that is informed by Bird and Brush (2002) to examine the narratives through a gender lens, and Goffman (1990) and Anderson (2005), to look at how couples recreate their intimate characters to become a copreneurial business.

The analysis highlighted three themes that emerged from the interpretation of the copreneurial narratives. Drawing on a theatrical metaphor the findings were presented as three acts (see Fig 14, p.299).

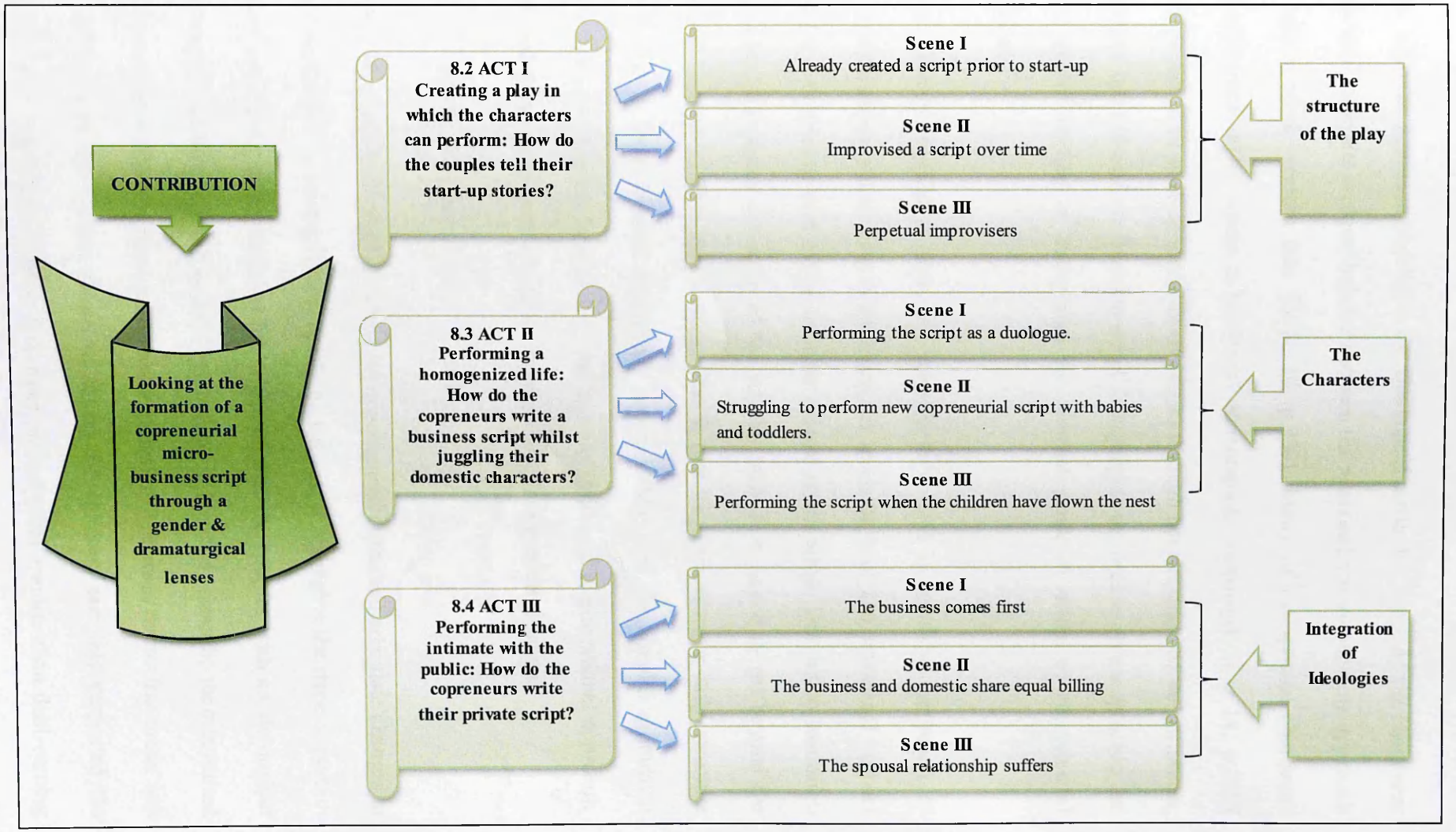
8.5.1 Act I: The structure of the Play

The first act examined how the couples narrated the creation of their entrepreneurial script and how they constructed what part they would play within it. It introduced the dialogue from a selection of the copreneurial scripts, which demonstrated the gendered construction of the characters, and how they use narrative to make sense of

the structures and roles they have created for their new script. It would seem that the copreneurs articulate various stages of relational maturity discussed by Bird and Brush (2002) that the couples achieved, guided by the gender and performative framework presented in this chapter.

The concept of maturity in this context offers insights into how the couples articulate their journey from an intimate spousal performance to a more public copreneurial characterisation. It highlights what part gender plays in the rewriting of their script and identifies whether the couples create this new drama using a relational, autonomous or combined approach to copreneurial business. This analysis reveals links to Bird and Brush's (2002: 55) notions of gender maturity whereby they claim that those entrepreneurs able to balance both the masculine and feminine dimensions are creating an alternative *"personal approach"* to entrepreneurship. It highlights how this intimate characterisation adds a further dimension of interpretation to the embeddedness perspective in family business building on the work of Aldrich and Cliff (2003).

Figure 14: Articulating the copreneurial experience through a dramaturgical lens



This tripartite approach highlights the ideological battle that many of the characters have to incorporate an equal balance between the relational and autonomous approach to organization creation (see Table. 10, p.250). Many of the spousal characters describe their roles within a traditional stereotypical framework (Fig 14, p.299) outlines the three start-up scenarios identified through interpretation of the narratives, and how this affected the business script. It highlights the need to reconceptualise the copreneurial start-up to incorporate the intimate gendered nature of copreneurial business.

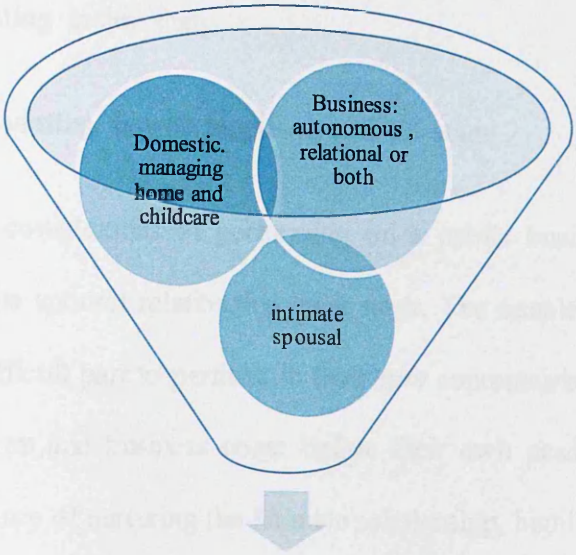
This Chapter highlights how the couples articulated a relational approach to entrepreneurship where they emphasised the need for trust and emotional support created over time as part of the intimate spousal relationship. This led to confusion and lack of direction for some of the couples who were unable to get beyond the familial aspects of their relationship. That is that they articulated a daily structure embedded in their spousal and family routines. Many of the couples articulated difficulties in stepping beyond this into a more structured organizational approach. This was particularly prevalent in the businesses with dependent children.

8.5.2 Act II: The Characters

A key theme in Act II highlights how the copreneurial characters articulate changes to their performances during certain family transitions. It highlights the three important stages articulated of copreneurial life which present the couples with an ideological dilemma (McAdam & Marlow, 2013) embedded in how they describe their gendered performances in the business and domestic domains. The main theme that arose was concerned with the various stages of caring for children, and this supported the premise that copreneurs behave in a more stereotypical manner than dual earning

couples (Marshack, 1994; Howorth *et al.,* 2010) with women continuing to carry the weight of the domestic burden (Bensemann & Hall, 2010; Cole, 1997; Chell & Baines, 1998; Millman & Martin, 2007). The couples articulate the difficulty of accessing affordable support with childcare when family capital is sparse or non-existent, and highlights the need for targeted support of copreneurial micro-businesses evidenced in the Lord Young Report, (2013). Act II also highlighted the extent to which the couples described a homogenized life that achieved little separation between the business and domestic domains for the couples. This created a mixing of their separate domains to create one non-discernible whole (Fig. 15, p.302) to create their copreneurial characters. The couples articulated how transitions affected their spousal relationships, particularly at the stage when they were managing childcare alongside their business script.

Figure 15: Creating Copreneurial Characters



The creation of the copreneurial characters and the roles that they perform changed over time according to the narratives. The homogenization of the three areas (Fig. 15) shows through interpretation of the narratives that the women continue to perform the lion's share of the work particularly when they have young children. In the business the couples perform either an autonomous or relational role or both depending on whether they have other family members to care for, and the intimate spousal relationship often plays a secondary role in the copreneurial drama. The combination of the three areas serves to create the copreneurial characters.

An important insight indicated that the two couples who were at the empty nest stage of their lives represented the two business that had a female spouse as the entrepreneurial lead which adds insight to the questioned posed by Fitzgerald and Muske, (2002: 14) on the changes in the *"business/family interface"* once the children have left home. This insight also demonstrated that the couples articulated a greater balance between the male and female dimension presented in the framework on page

226. The male spouses were performing a greater level of relational labour than other counterparts participating in this study.

8.5.3 Act III: Articulating how to juggle on and off-stage

Act III debates the complexities of performing on a public business stage whilst managing the intimate spousal relationship back stage. The couples articulated how this was the most difficult part to perform in their new copreneurial script citing the needs of their children and business come before their own needs. Nelton (1986) describes the importance of nurturing the intimate relationship, highlighting the darker side to copreneurship when the interlinked relationship can end in the breakdown of the marriage and continuation of the business. This perspective supports Cole and Johnson (2007), who found a similar outcome, highlighting that high levels of trust maintained with the spouses even after divorce. This enabled the couples to maintain a good working relationship with each other.

Interpretation of the narratives highlights how the couples are constructing their new characters within a gender framework, performing very traditional roles as parents and entrepreneurs. They articulate to the audience a cast of predominantly time poor couples who place little importance on their own needs with their intimate other. This contributes to a more nuanced understanding of what it is to be involved with an intimate other as part of a copreneurial micro-business. It highlights the need for greater consideration of the importance of nurturing the intimate, relational dimensions of the copreneurial micro-business.

Chapter 9

Chapter 9 – Conclusion and future directions for research

9.1 Introduction

9.2 Interpreting the narratives to understand the premise for copreneurial business

9.3 Using an interpretation of the narratives to understand the premise for copreneurial business

9.4 Spousal role in the new drama: Gender, power and relational practice

9.5 The family characters in a copreneurial business

9.6 Contributing to the methodology

9.7 Future research

9.8 Recommendations for future research

Chapter 9 – Conclusion and future directions for research

9.1 Introduction

This thesis has developed new understanding of the copreneurial experience drawing on the interviews with fourteen micro-businesses. Whilst focus on copreneurship appears in the family business and entrepreneurial literature, research has not been developed to date. Despite calls for new qualitative approaches, there has been no exploration drawing upon the dramaturgical or relational perspectives. This study used interpretative phenomenological analysis IPA to explore the narratives elicited in the interviews to revealing how the couples homogenized their intimate, domestic and business domains to construct a third, relational sphere. It reveals how the majority of the businesses in the study articulate no clear separation of the public and private domains, particularly for the women copreneurs.

A key objective of this study was to establish how the couples created their new copreneurial characters as part of their new script. IPA provided a powerful inductive tool that enabled a more nuanced understanding of the copreneurial story. This interpretative phenomenological approach used by Cope, (2011) has been under-utilized in entrepreneurship and family business research. It enabled the study to develop a rich collection of empirical material that highlighted the intricate and intimate complexities of the copreneurial dynamic.

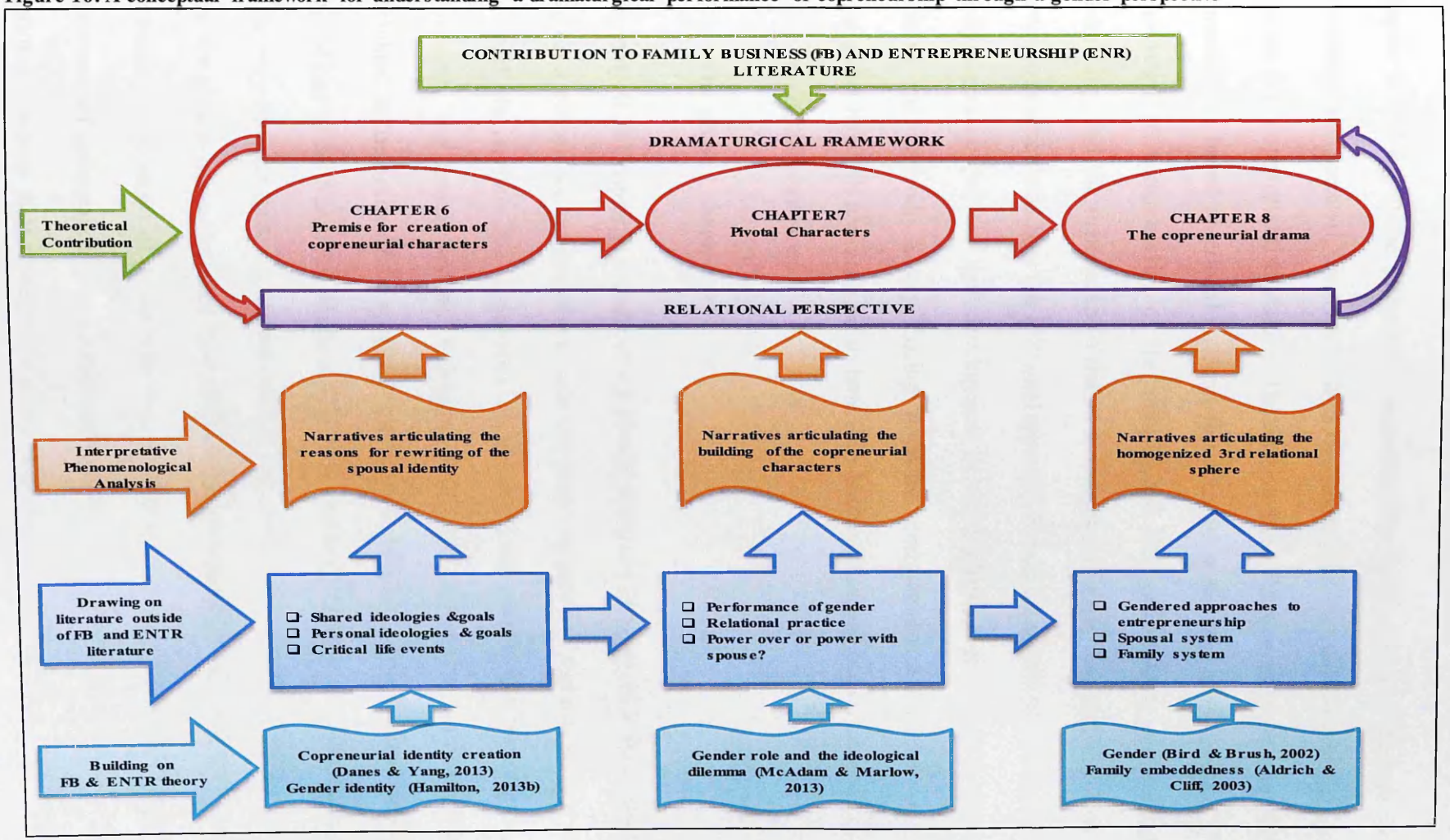
This thesis contributes both theoretically and methodologically to the understanding of the copreneurial experience. Fig (16, p.307) presents the research framework for this study highlighting the methodological contribution and three main areas of contribution to the research in the family business and entrepreneurship literature in

understanding the copreneurial dynamic. The following section (see Fig. 16, p.307) will present an explanation of the dramaturgical framework developed for this thesis.

9.2 Creating a dramaturgical framework

This thesis presents a major conceptual contribution by developing a dramaturgical framework for the analysis of the copreneurial experience (see Fig. 16, p.307). The creation of the framework drew heavily on the theatrical perspective developed by Goffman (1990), and the work of Egri (1965) that provided the starting point for creating the structure of the framework. To date this analytical approach has been underutilized in entrepreneurship and family business literature. This approach contributed three interesting insights, (1) the importance of shared ideologies and goals within the premise for copreneurship based on non-economic goals; (2) the important relational role performed by the pivotal characters, particularly the women; and (3) how embedded socially constructed gender dimensions are in the creation and life of the copreneurial drama.

Figure 16: A conceptual framework for understanding a dramaturgical performance of copreneurship through a gender perspective



9.2.1 Premise for the creation of the copreneurial characters

Chapter 6 looking at the premise for copreneurship firstly examined through the dramaturgical framework the way in which the couples re-write their intimate lives to become new copreneurial characters. The analysis identified four main premises for copreneurship based on critical incidents that occurred in the lives of the couples. It contributed an understanding of the intimacy and trust embedded in the spousal relationship, and the importance of shared ideologies and goals. The majority of the participants articulated how this relational approach formed the central structure of the decision-making process and development of the business both at new venture creation and beyond. A key finding from the interpretation of the narratives highlighted how this approach led to little if no business planning prior to start-up for all but two of the businesses.

9.2.2 The pivotal characters

The analysis in Chapter 7, introduced the pivotal characters revealing how the couples take on a subversive entrepreneurial role that draws on intimacy and relationship to construct the script. The importance of the relational abilities of the couples, particularly the female spouse, highlights a different approach to copreneurship embedded in the desire of the couple to maintain the spousal ideologies, building on the findings of McAdam and Marlow, (2013). It also contributes to an understanding of the way in which these women are creating less stereotypical scripts for themselves. How the couple has constructed their relational script determines how they approach the business and issues of power with their intimate other. A key finding reveals the importance of understanding the couple's ability to perform within a framework in the relationship where they share power rather than hold it over the other. This study

shows how the majority of the copreneurs choreograph an intimate ballet of interchangeable power that enables each spouse to play an equal role in the business. This calls into question the current hegemonic discourse on a copreneurial business consisting of an entrepreneurial leader and supportive spouse.

9.2.3 The copreneurial drama

In Chapter 8, the analysis built upon family embeddedness theory (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003, Fletcher, 2010) arguing that there has been little consideration of the spousal dynamic in copreneurial studies. A main consideration for the research was to identify how the couples apply a relational rather than autonomous approach to creating and maintaining their copreneurial lives. This study contributes to the research on the copreneurial experience by using a gender perspective to consider how integral the intimate relationship is to formulating the copreneurial principles for copreneurship. It builds on the work of Miller (1977) by applying a relational perspective to explore how the copreneurs articulate connection to others as a central premise to their approach to business.

The purpose of the next section is to discuss the research contribution and show how the aims of this study were met.

9.3 Using an interpretation of the narratives to understand the premise for copreneurial business

Examination of entrepreneurship and family business literature highlighted the lack of attention paid to the intimate spousal relationship in copreneurial business (Brannon *et al.,* 2012; Danes & Jang, 2013). This study focused on the start-up stories of fourteen copreneurial micro-businesses drawing on UK citizens working in the UK and France.

It could be agreed that, the limitation of this thesis is that it offers an insight into the lives of copreneurs but cannot claim to represent all such businesses. The dramaturgical interpretation provided rich empirical and theoretical insight that revealed the many layers and complexities of founding and managing a business with an intimate other. Interpreting the copreneurial stories of intimately linked business partners through a dramaturgical framework provided insight into how the couples create new performances out of their established spousal lives. This analytical approach shows how the couples write a new script for their lives based on either shared ideologies and goals or the desire to support their intimate other to create a new drama for their lives. The research also revealed that whilst the businesses were very diverse, their start-up goals and ideologies fitted into four premises; the corner stone, the lovers, the pillars of the temple or love amongst the ruins, often founded in their spousal intimacy and relational drive to be a supportive partner. This tendency to base the start-up decisions on the intimate relationship revealed a lack of business planning for all but two of the businesses.

The thesis used the dramaturgical framework to create dramatic characters through their stories using Goffman's (1990) performative concept whereby all humans present a performance to the audience according to the scene they find themselves in , and Egri's (1960) framework for constructing a script. The analysis and interpretation of the stories highlighted a major contribution by revealing a group of characters who have chosen to re-write their public and private script to create a homogenized third space. It is here that they describe how business and domestic are performed in their newly constructed copreneurial drama. This supports the work of Aldrich and Cliff (2003) who see work and home as *"inextricably linked"* (p. 575) for family businesses.

This was apparent in the stories that the couples articulated as they presented the details of their day-to-day lives over a particular period in their lives.

A relational perspective highlighted the difficulties faced by the women in particular who struggled with the embedded gender ideologies that determine how the couples perform in the business and domestic spaces of their copreneurial drama. This supported and built on the work of McAdam and Marlow (2013) who discuss the ideological dilemmas of a copreneurial business, and Hamilton (2013b) who highlights the complexity of the female role in family business. This helped to identify how the couples are adapting to the new third homogenized sphere where the women are the main relational leaders.

9.4 Discovering a new way of regarding the process of entrepreneurship

In this research the formation of the copreneurial character is revealed as a complex and multi-layered process placing the spousal relationship at the centre of the new act in their relational script. It challenges the continued patriarchal discourse on entrepreneurship that privileges the man as the individual protagonist in the entrepreneurial drama. Dramaturgical interpretation showed that the couples were performing a relational, inclusive drama that incorporates their gender ideologies and shared goals. Miller's (1977) relational perspective suggests that organisations recruit women for their relational competencies. This thesis contributed to this perspective by demonstrating that unlike larger organizations where this is often invisible (Fletcher, 2001), this attribute is central to the creation and functioning of the copreneurial script. The narrative analysis in this study reveals that this relational approach to business enterprise is performed by both male and female spouses, and identified as, an important reason for choosing to work with their intimate other. It also reveals that in

the majority of the businesses the women are the relational leaders and that relational practice is central to the new copreneurial script.

This study shows that the rewriting of the intimate relationship to become copreneurs relies on the couple's ability to run the business as they have run their spousal relationship built on intimacy and trust. This is contra to the current understanding of what constitutes an entrepreneur, and forms a major contribution by showing through a dramaturgical conceptual framework that for such businesses the bottom line is not driven by economic outcomes unless the copreneurs are faced with hardship. This contributes both empirically and theoretically to an understanding of the copreneurial experience. This rewriting of the script is articulated through the stories told by the couples who describe how they attempt to blend their two worlds into one homogenized whole. They articulate a world in which, like oil and vinegar this is not always a perfect mix but an effort to disrupt the liquid enough to form an acceptable blend.

The relational and individual power is interchangeable for many of the couples, and affected by the daily changes in the spouses' lives over time (Aldrich and Cliff, 2003). It presents a potential new way of understanding the process of entrepreneurship as a practice embedded in familial, relational, and social practices to form the potential nucleus for a family business. The research shows that performing entrepreneurship in this way can have its darker side, when the intimate relationship and family goals affect the performance of the business (Danes, Fitzgerald & Doll, 2000). The lack of business knowledge, planning and an understanding of what is required when choosing to risk all to create a copreneurial script, is articulated by some of the narratives in this study of the copreneurial drama (Chapter 8).

9.5 Spousal role in the new drama: Gender, power and relational practice

Interpretation and analysis of the narratives contributes to an understanding of the ideological starting point for each of the couples and how masculine and feminine approaches to start-up embedded in the participant's gendered identities discussed in Chapter 7 (p.208). The research presented a detailed view of the parts performed by the men and women in the copreneurial drama drawing heavily on Goffman's (1990) dramaturgical approach and building on Anderson (2005) in the entrepreneurship literature to understanding the narratives. It adds further by exploring Butler's (1990) premise that gender is performed. The women as pivotal characters (Chapter 7) perceived that they are able to perform an equal role in many of the businesses sharing directorial and leadership status alongside their male spouse and, having a major influence on the daily decisions and running of the business. Venter *et al.,* (2009) highlight how there has been little exploration of the relational aspect to copreneurial business in the literature particularly through a gender lens (Hamilton, 2013; McAdam & Marlow, 2013). This study highlights the importance of adding to a greater understanding of the intimate alongside the entrepreneurial in the family business and entrepreneurship literature. The stories in this study revealed the complex and difficult process of achieving the goals and gender ideologies for the couples beyond the start-up phase.

This study contributes to the discussion on what part gender role can play in the formation of this new character, and how gender ideologies can affect the creation of the spousal copreneurial script. A dramaturgical interpretation shows that the couples articulate how they are constrained by their socially constructed world that pre-

determines the roles they play in their business and home. This study revealed how each couple attempted to navigate through their complex gendered lives, highlighting the multi-layered role played by the women particularly when young children were part of the family dynamic.

This study articulated how a number of the men created a picture of relational embeddedness as part of their ideological premise for the business, whereby they too could spend more time with their children. The women described an ideological world where being part of a copreneurial business would enable them to achieve a more equitable working and personal role with their spouse. The dramaturgical interpretation revealed that the reality for the women presented a different drama where they were the relational leaders in the business and the domestic in all but two of the fourteen businesses. As pivotal characters their relational competencies were benefitting the business and unlike the organizational approach that renders such capabilities invisible (Fletcher, 2001), they are adopting it as an integral part of their business strategy.

The relational interpretation revealed how this was not without its difficulties for the women who reflect the continued inequality of the gender roles in the domestic sphere. They continue to articulate how they provide the main domestic labour in their rewritten script. This shows that the third relational sphere does not always achieve their copreneurial ideologies and goals to have an equal partnership with their spouse. This shows how the men are able to achieve their goals and ideologies via the relational competencies of their female spouse, changing very little in their business and domestic lives. Relational interpretation shows how the public-private imbalance articulated in the copreneurial scripts did not reflect any high levels of conflict based on this discrepancy in the business-domestic balance in the majority of the narratives.

This is contra to current discourse in the literature where it highlights the propensity for *"tension"* in the family business dynamic when a wife becomes involved in the business (Danes & Olson: 2003). The couples were attempting to achieve a balance of power with rather than power over (Fletcher, 2001) with their intimate-business partner with varying degrees of success depending on which stage they were at in the business relationship. The couples demonstrating a greater relational balance were at a stage in their lives where either they had no dependents or, the children were grown up and the women had chosen to take the entrepreneurial lead at the start-up phase. The analysis of the copreneurial drama (Chapter 8) explored how this construction of a third relational sphere where the couples construct their copreneurial characters embedded in the emotionally laden marital and family constructs. Interpretation of the narratives revealed how such an approach to new venture creation and business development can prevent the couples form achieving their start-up ideologies and goals.

This thesis adopted a multi-disciplinary approach to the study drawing on the work of Danes and Jang (2013) in Chapter 6 to add insight into the rewriting of the intimate characters to create the copreneurial characters. In Chapter 7, this thesis drew on Miller's (1977) relational perspective to explore how the couples articulate their characters performing a relational approach to power and their gender ideologies. It highlighted how the couples supported Marshack's (1994) findings whereby copreneurs perform within a stereotypical framework. Chapter 8 contributed to the family business and entrepreneurship literature by looking at the family embeddedness perspective through a gender lens.

9.6 The family characters in a copreneurial business

A key outcome of the research was to understand how a couple could re-write their intimate spousal characters to become a joint, copreneurial characters. The literature review revealed that, whilst a great deal has been said about the formation of the entrepreneurial identity, understanding of the spousal role and level of commitment to the entrepreneur is limited (Danes & Jang, 2013). The extant literature continues to consider family business in the context of an entrepreneurial leader and supportive spouse (Barnett & Barnett, 1988; Cramton, 1993; Danes & Olson, 2003; McAdam & Marlow, 2013). There have been calls for a consideration and greater understanding of the *"shared vision"* of the copreneurial venture by Danes and Jang (2013: 46).

A great deal has been written about family business and the part that family members play in creating a family business, however, to date very little enquiry has been made into copreneurial micro-business as the potential birth of the family business phenomena. This study introduces a new way of considering the formation of a copreneurial business through a relational lens (Fletcher, 2001; Miller, 1977). To date there has not been an explicit qualitative consideration of this perspective of copreneurial business in the literature.

This study has made a major contribution by developing a more nuanced way of understanding of the homogenizing of business, family and socially embedded practices to creating a third relational sphere. This study has highlighted the importance of the spousal intimate relationship in constructing the shared ideologies and goals of the couples at the start-up phase. The narratives of the participants articulated a complex and at times emotionally laden approach to copreneurship where the spousal relationship could either enhance or restrict the start-up goals for the new

drama in their lives. This study revealed through the dramaturgical perspective how the couples wove a complicated fabric around their newly formed characters. It highlighted how they were unable to fully realize their start-up goals and ideologies for their newly written copreneurial lives based on their noneconomic goals. The reality of owning and managing a business presented the couples with a difficult dilemma, to prioritise the needs of the business or the needs of the intimate relationship. This was achieved with varying degrees of success and depended on the *"family system characteristics"* examined previously by Aldrich and Cliff (2003) using a family embeddedness perspective. This study contributes to this perspective by examining the nuances of the *"smallest measure of family business"* (Blenkinsopp & Owens, 2010) to add a more detailed understanding of this intimately linked dynamic.

A major contribution of this thesis builds upon the family embeddedness perspective (Aldrich & Cliff: 590) to add a gender lens, showing that the embeddedness of intimate spousal relationship forms the main body of the copreneurial script. Relational interpretation shows how spousal intimacy formed the foundation for their business relationship, revealing how the couples made no plan and took no opportunity to discuss what specific role they would play in the business at the start-up phase and beyond.

This study supports and develops the findings of Aldrich and Cliff (2003) who suggested that new venture creation could be founded in personal family relationships rather than the *"rational assessments of discovered economic opportunities"* (p.577). This research revealed that one couple went further to choose the copreneurial path based on spousal love in the case of the lovers, and a desire to spend more time with their partner, with no interest in the nature of the business they were buying. This

shows a tendency to make the intimate, relational performance central to the couples ideologies and goals.

The analysis revealed a mixed participation from other family members in the copreneurial businesses at the start-up phase and beyond. Many of the micro-businesses struggled to draw on their family capital over any period of time, which made it particularly difficult for the couples once they had children. The analysis highlighted how this phase in the copreneurial businesses was particularly difficult for the women who found themselves performing a leadership role in both the business and the domestic domains. This highlights the conceptual link between relational practice and organizational behaviour discussed by Miller (1977) and Fletcher (2001). This study contributes to understanding the copreneurial experience by revealing that relational competency performs a visible role for most of the businesses, and became a tool to enable the business to function using a relational approach of caring for, and enabling each spouse to achieve their ideologies and goals. This study highlighted how this was achieved with varying degrees of success and relied heavily on the female partners to play the role of relational leader. The analysis also highlighted how this script would change over time as the children matured and left home and greater relational equity grew for the intimately linked pivotal characters.

Re-conceptualizing copreneurial business as the performance of the potential germination stage of a family business through a relational lens has enabled a more nuanced understanding of the intimate, spousal dynamic. It has highlighted the important role that the relational leader plays in this particular business construct. However, there is also an indication from the narratives that this may change over time based on the life-stage of the couple relationship.

9.7 Methodological contribution

This study contributes in a number of ways to the current study of the copreneurial dynamic. It has made an important empirical contribution by using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to highlight the rich and nuanced stories of fourteen copreneurial businesses at the start-up stage. This part of the analysis highlighted the use of IPA as a device to gather and interpret the phenomena of personal, lived experience at a critical point in a person's life. In this instance, it enabled the researcher to gain a more nuanced understanding of the complexities of entering into a business with an intimate other. A Narrative approach using IPA offers a powerful vehicle for the interpretation of the relational aspects of family business and entrepreneurship. It did however highlight the complexities of applying such an approach to a larger study for an early career researcher where resources are limited.

A major contribution of this study has been the creation of a dramaturgical conceptual framework offering a novel approach to interpreting how intimately linked couples re-write their lives to create copreneurial characters. Reissman (2008: 3) suggests that speakers will tell stories that present their narratives sequentially with a view to creating meaning for the listener. She goes on to say that, *"Events perceived by the speaker as important are selected, organized, connected, and evaluated as meaningful for a particular audience"*. The theatrical metaphor offers a powerful means of interpreting how the couples articulate the reconstruction of their daily lives to become copreneurs.

This study has demonstrated the power of narrative (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Czarniawska, 2004; Hamilton, 2013b) to reveal the part that the intimate, spousal relationship plays in the formation of a copreneurial character. It suggests an

alternative way of performing entrepreneurship that is embedded in the intimate history of the couples who choose to re-write their family lives.

9.7.1 Summary of the contribution

In summary, this thesis contributes in three ways to the current understanding of copreneurial micro-business. Firstly, family business and entrepreneurship literature, has not previously used a relational lens in a qualitative study to consider the concept of copreneurship with an intimate other. This study contributes to the current theoretical approaches to family embeddedness by drawing on gender theory. It offers a new way of conceptualizing entrepreneurship as embedded in the intimate spousal relationship for copreneurs and explores how this influences the decision making process.

Secondly, it contributes methodically by using interpretative phenomenological analysis to explore the in-depth narratives of fourteen copreneurial businesses to gain a more detailed understanding of the copreneurial experience.

Finally and most importantly, it offers a major theoretical contribution by creating a dramaturgical conceptual framework to achieve a greater understanding of the copreneurial experience. This thesis contributes to the growing literature that examines copreneurship using dramaturgical and gender perspectives.

9.8 Future research

The next section examines the research approach for this thesis and provides the platform for a number of avenues for future research.

9.8.1 Limitations of this study

This study has been able to use interpretative phenomenological analysis to look at the in-depth narratives of fourteen copreneurial micro-businesses using a dramaturgical conceptual framework. This has created opportunities to add to existing knowledge. However, it is also important highlight the boundaries and limitations of this study that are discussed in following three sections.

9.8.2 Considering the ability to generalise on the findings

This study focused specifically on fourteen copreneurial micro-businesses in the UK. The thesis did not consider that the findings would offer any ability to generalise the study to other copreneurial businesses but to offer a starting point for further exploration of this intimately linked dynamic.

9.8.3 Methodological reflections

The use of IPA in gathering and analysing data highlights the importance of the researcher role in the analytical process (Smith *et al.,* 2009). It presents the researcher as part of the complex and multi-layered process that is IPA, and is considered to be idiographic, that is it examines the detail of the narratives. It seeks to draw on the detail of the participant's experience and how they make sense of that experience through a dramaturgical conceptual framework The interviews became part of the creation of the copreneurial script with the researcher acting as both audience and the playwright. Initially the process involved collaboration between researcher and participants who were offered the opportunity to voice a particular impression of a specific critical moment in their lives. Through IPA, the researcher/playwright begins the process of unpicking the rich stories to reveal the phenomenon that will help to

produce a coherent script. This particular version makes no claim that the interviewer is not part of this construction and therefore brings a personal and experienced history to the construction of the script. Smith *et al.*, (2009: 3) suggest that:

> *"This captures the dual role of the researcher. He/she is employing the same mental and personal skills and capacities as the participant, with whom he/she shares fundamental property – that of being a human being. At the same time, the researcher employs those skills more self-consciously and systematically. As such, the researcher's sense making is second order; he/she only has access to the participant's experience through the participants own account of it".*

This study therefore highlights the issue of generalizability and making claims for the wider copreneurial community. The findings represent a particular version of copreneurial experience based on a dramaturgical and relational interpretation of the fourteen businesses participating in this study.

9.8.4 Enabling the copreneurs to tell their story

The aim of this thesis was to give voice to an underrepresented area of family business research, and understand how intimately linked couples rewrite their lives to become copreneurs by developing a dramaturgical conceptual framework. The study explored the rewriting of the intimate characters using a theatrical metaphor to present the findings. Chapter 6 presented the premise for start-up using the narratives to identify the participant ideologies and goals. It highlighted that for the participant in this study there emerged four premises for copreneurship, which adds new insight into the motivation behind an intimately linked couple becoming a copreneurial micro-business. Chapter 7 introduced the pivotal characters and contributed empirically and

theoretically to current research by drawing on the dramaturgical conceptual framework to show how the couples perform in a relational third sphere where they attempt to share power with rather than over the other. Finally, Chapter 8 used the dramaturgical conceptual framework to interpret and present the copreneurial scripts, contributing to a more in-depth understanding of the embeddedness of the spousal and family relationships in copreneurial business building on Aldrich and Cliff, (2003). It also showed the importance of managing life transitions, particularly when the couples have dependent children.

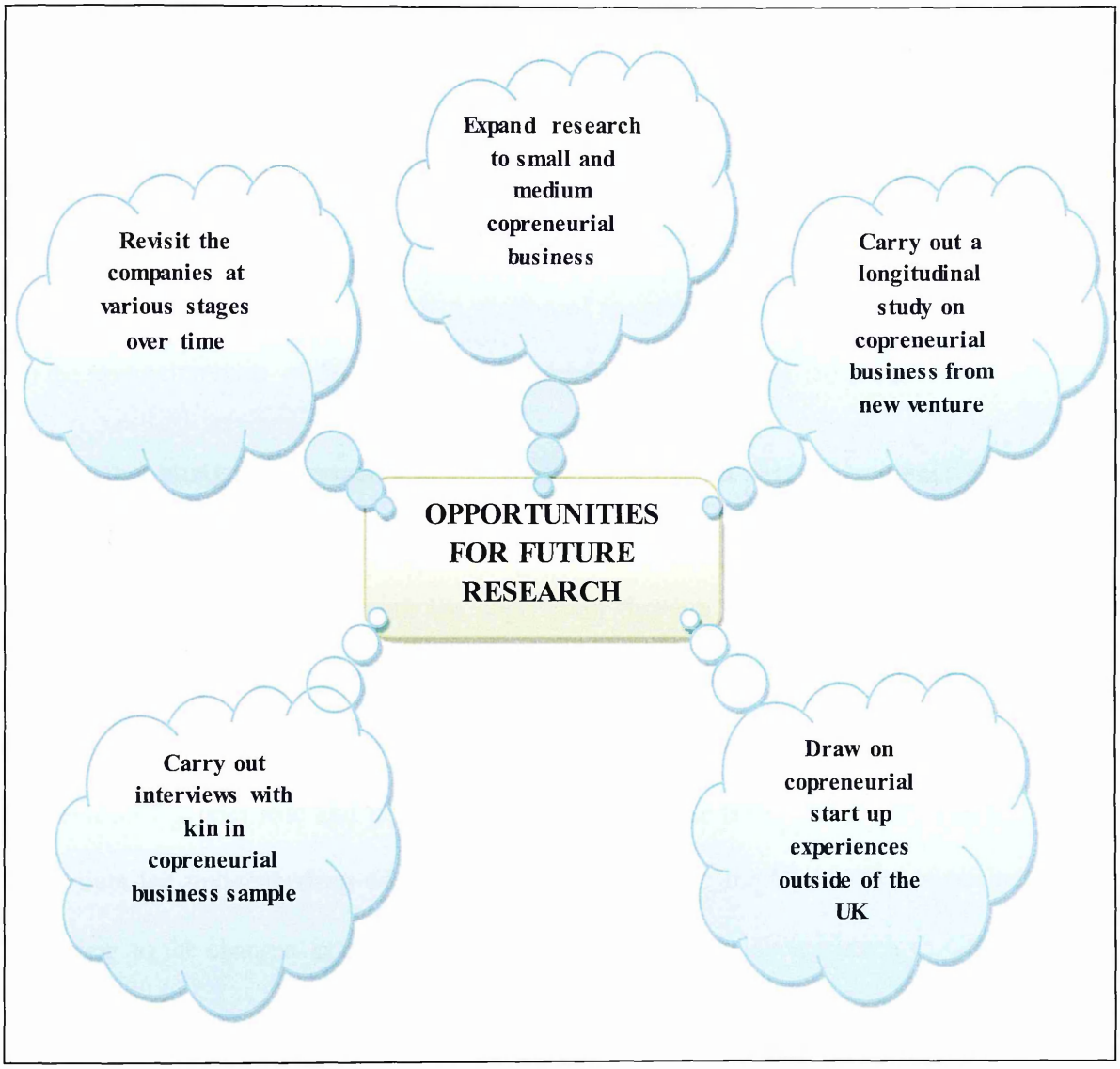
This thesis formed an important starting point for understanding the detailed stories of the copreneurs as the possible germination stage of a family business. It is an important first step in the study of family business and the role that intimacy and relational practice play in this rewriting of work and family life.

9.9 Recommendations for future research

The couples participating in this study represent a small cross section of the copreneurial community and highlight the need for a much larger study that incorporates copreneurial businesses of varying sizes. (Fig. 17, p.324) illustrates possible areas that offer an opportunity for further research in the future. It is an illustration of some of the main areas of possible research for development from the current study. It offers a starting point but does not represent every possible option for future study based on the rich seam of data gathered and any future expansion of the data set. There are a number of interesting phenomena that arose from the analysis of the narratives, not least the fact that the role performed by the spouses had the potential to change over time. This highlighted in Figure 17 (p.324) the future

possibility of revisiting the fourteen businesses to expand the start-up stories into the development and growth of the businesses over time.

Figure 17: Areas for future research



The research identified that it would be beneficial to expand the research sample to small and medium sized businesses in any future study. This would offer the opportunity to identify what part the different entrepreneurial approach might play in a business as it expands and increases the cast in the play. It will enable the researcher to explore the insights already gained into the gender identities of the couples, and what part the relational competencies of each spouse play in the growing company.

This thesis has concentrated on the intimate ties of the spousal relationship to inform the question of how the couples rewrite their lives to become copreneurs. To expand on this relational insight it would be beneficial to interview the kinship group of each of the businesses. They play an important part in building the supporting cast that helps to construct the copreneurial script. The narratives would provide a greater body of personal accounts of the copreneurial story as a potential starting point for a family business. This will help to create the scenes of the play in more detail as each character is able to recreate their own version of the story. The study currently draws on the spousal version of the part that the supporting artists play in the drama.

The current study of copreneurs in the extant literature has paid little attention to a longitudinal approach to examining the spousal dynamic. This approach starting from the start-up phase and following the copreneurs through the various stages of the business development over time would provide a potential for understanding how couples achieve their start up goals. It will also enable the researcher to gather data on the issues of gender role and power with the couples over time. This could lead to a more detailed understanding of how the spousal dynamic might develop over time, according to the changes in their personal and socio/economic circumstance.

An interesting area for future research involves a comparative study of copreneurial business worldwide. It would be an important contribution to the current understanding of copreneurial businesses, and how the cultural and socio/economic influences of various countries which helps to influence and construct the copreneurial character.

9.10 Implications for business education and policy

Current policy on micro-business in the UK is in the early stages of development with the introduction of the Lord Young report (2013) discussed in this thesis, which highlights the need for a more targeted approach. Micro-business accounts for over 95% of the private sector business in the UK of which many would be copreneurial businesses based on the FSB report (2014). This research offers an insight into the importance of understanding the relational construction of such businesses, and therefore the importance of offering support and training targeted at this particular entrepreneurial dynamic.

9.10.1 Supporting the relational approach to entrepreneurship

This thesis contributes to a greater understanding that relationship and connection to others is central to the entrepreneurial construct for the majority of the participants in this study. Many of the participants suggested that the participating in the interview was the first opportunity to talk about their experiences as copreneurs. They highlighted the fact that as a micro-business they lacked both the economic and practical ability to access training or business networks targeted at their specific demographic. All of the businesses articulated a desire for economic and personal growth however, emphasis was placed on creating a company that would enable them to maintain their start-up ideologies and goals embedded in the relational construction of their copreneurial characters. The participants in this study articulated their desire for connection to others both in their working environment and as part of a wider entrepreneurial network. The current lack of access to targeted training for micro-business was articulated by the participants in this study.

Interpretation of the narratives supports the NIACE report (2012) which suggests that micro-businesses require a relational approach from training practitioners (p.17) as discussed in the introduction of this thesis. This researcher would also argue that a more holistic approach to enabling copreneurs to draw on business and therapeutic programmes from organisations such as Relate, and research led institutions structured as part of a more targeted form of business support and training. This relational approach has gained little credence since the recommendations of Danes and Morgan (2004) to incorporate a more holistic approach at Government or practitioner level. The Lord Young report (2013) and organizational reports such as NIACE (2012) and the FSB member survey (2014) all call for a more interdisciplinary approach drawing on training practitioners and academic institutions to construct research led programmes that draw on a multidisciplinary pool to deliver a more nuanced service to micro-businesses.

This thesis has highlighted the complex and intimate world of a small group of copreneurs using a dramaturgical conceptual framework. It has enabled the researcher to support the premise that IPA is a powerful means of making sense of the narratives through a performative and relational lens, to understand this potential germination stage of a family business. It has emphasised the importance of trust and connection to others as a central remit for choosing to go into business with an intimate other. It has demonstrated that such a premise for business is not without its problems. The challenge for researchers and practitioners in moving forward is to develop a means of providing support and training that is able to meet these businesses in their relational world. This will require all parties to adopt a multi-disciplinary approach to the support mechanisms provided for family business, particularly at the micro-level. This study has identified that very few of the participants made a plan prior to business

start-up and relied on the trust built up through intimacy to guide the early draft of their new copreneurial script. This thesis contributes towards understanding through relational interpretation the part that intimacy and connection to others play in the construction of the copreneurial character. This presents us with a different way of looking at the entrepreneurial act where non-economic goals are often the starting point for copreneurship. However, we are not looking at lifestyle businesses where there is no desire for growth. This study contributes by demonstrating that many of the couples have a desire to grow their businesses, but that the majority of them were unable to access support networks that were able to understand their approach to business. All of the micro-businesses narrated a desire to place family/spousal values at the heart of their business strategy.

This study has contributed both methodological and theoretically to an understanding of the copreneurial experience. It has also drawn attention to the lack of understanding or interest in such micro-businesses that require specific and targeted interventions. There are very few services available to such businesses that are often unable to financially or practically access economic, educational and network support. This study highlights the need for more targeted legislation and educational resources that take into consideration the complexities of copreneurial micro-business. It has shown that such businesses have ambitions to grow but often lack the resources to access the right support to achieve this.

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Appendix 1: Letter to possible participants

Dear

My name is Angela Carradus and I am a PhD student at Lancaster University. I am looking at couples and or business partners who own and run their own business together, with a particular interest in how they balance both work and home life.

The research will consist of an interview with each couple lasting between one and one and a half hour where the participants will be able to tell their story, facilitated by me where appropriate.

I will be taping the interviews and this will then be fully transcribed.

All names will be changed to maintain anonymity. I will be aiming for publication on completion of my PhD and may use your data as part of this process.

I would be most grateful if you would consider participating in this research, and if you know of any other entrepreneurs that you feel may be suitable please pass this invitation on.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my request

Kind regards,

Angela

Appendix 2: Section of transcript

PhD Interview three		
Emergent Themes	**Original Transcript**	**Exploratory Comments**
(HEROIC MALE LEADER) Business developed by Ed. (LIFE TRANSITITION) E Critical point in life Not happy at work (LIFE TRANSITION) Coincided with birth of their child. Another critical point. (LIFE TRANSITION) E head hunted by bigger company.	A: So just for openers erm if you don't mind sort of erm, tell me a little bit about yourselves erm what, what lead you to go into business together? E & T: [Both laughing] E: I started the business how many years, erm a long time ago how many years twenty something years ago… T: Well know you started we started you started talking about it about the training specifically when [child] when I was pregnant with [child]. E: Eighteen years ago T: So he's mm he'll be nineteen. E: Yep and then err because I had a err retail company which err… T: before that… E: …yeh I wasn't happy with so we got rid of it and I just decided to go into training and this was at the time that [child]was just about to be born so it wasn't a good time to do it [laugh] but we did it. T: Well it's kind of, I mean it was related, you made it sound like it was different but I mean you sold the equipment for multi-sensory rooms and then you went to work for one of the bigger companies didn't ya they sort of head hunted you as, as of MD for their little bit.	Both appear to express nervousness through laughter. E: Ed started business. T: struggling to articulate the we, and I. They discussed Ed developing a business when Tammy was pregnant. T not sure how to define start-up as a joint idea or Eds idea. E: 18 years ago T: correcting Ed, 19 years ago. E: Before that Ed had a retail company. E: Wasn't happy with that so went into training. E: Same time as birth of child so not a good time to do it, but did it anyway. T: Pointing out that the new business was related to Ed's previous work with multi-sensory rooms. E. was "head hunted" and worked as an MD for a bigger company for a while.

Explanation of colour coding: Red=Discourse on business. Green=Self. Blue=Relation to others. Brown=Researcher's observations

Emergent Themes	Original Transcript	Exploratory Comments
(AUTONOMY) Critical point E not happy working for somebody else. (OPPORTUNITY RECOGNITION) (FAMILY TENSION) Ed. Undermining Tammy's work.	E: Mm T: and you spent the two years before [child] was born kind of looking at research and development for them E: Yeh… T: …really erm but then he got really fed up with, with that… E: Accountability [laughing] T: Well no it wasn't so much that, it was the fact that people would just spend all this money and not actually know why they needed it or why they wanted it. E: A lot of companies as in people… T: custom, customers E: …as in buy multi-sensory rooms you know and they, they, they, when they're spending government money or school money, I could just see twenty, forty, fifty thousand pounds just being spent because so and so down the roads got one, and it was almost like buying a new car. So I thought we need somebody to go into training and somebody to simply advise. So we set up this little business and it trundled along. You were a full time speech and language terrorist weren't you? T: Terrorist [under her breath] E: Sorry, sorry [123] and erm [clearing throat] and then er… T: Well we did that because you weren't making enough money…	E: Didn't like the "accountability" Using laughter, uncomfortable. T: Ed frustrated, struggling with the clients willingness to spend money without clear understanding of why? E: Identified the need for developing training. E: Uses derogatory language to describe T's job at the time. T: Not happy with E's reference to her work as a "terrorist". E: Apologetic. T: Defensive, her earnings were needed because E. Wasn't earning enough. T: Her job paid the mortgage.

Explanation of colour coding: Red=Discourse on business. Green=Self. Blue=Relation to others. Brown=Researcher's observations

Appendix 3: Extracts from interview three:

Edward and Tammy

(S.E.N.) Training

Extract 1

Edward and Tammy were very welcoming although I was initially nervous because we were based at their home. Having just looked at the ethical paperwork and the section on safety of the interviewer, I questioned the sensibility of going into a stranger's house. Tammy answered the door and put me at my ease straight away. The interview was held around the dining room table and Edward had his lap top open in front of him which made me feel as though he was either wanting to feel more powerful or defensive I wasn't quite sure which. He was less engaged than Tammy initially and fidgeted a lot, Tammy sat open and still which gave her an air of control and calm.

Extract 2

Edward and Tammy both acknowledged that their skills were complementary with Tammy taking an organisational role and Edward being the public face of the company. Tammy organised Edward's diary, which consisted of going into schools and centres training practitioners. He relied completely on Lois organising this and the logistics of travelling from place to place to deliver this. For the most part it would seem that he was task driven with Tammy ensuring that he was able to carry out his day to day work.

Tammy had a more complicated working/home day which over the years had required her to juggle child care and work five days a week with both adults concentrating on the family/friends at weekends. Lois had stipulated early on that if she was going to play a major part in the business then they would employ a cleaner to help reduce her day to day work load and responsibilities. However as Edward was away a lot so Tammy took the lion's share of the housekeeping. As their two sons grew older, they were also expected to play their part in the day-to-day chores in the house.

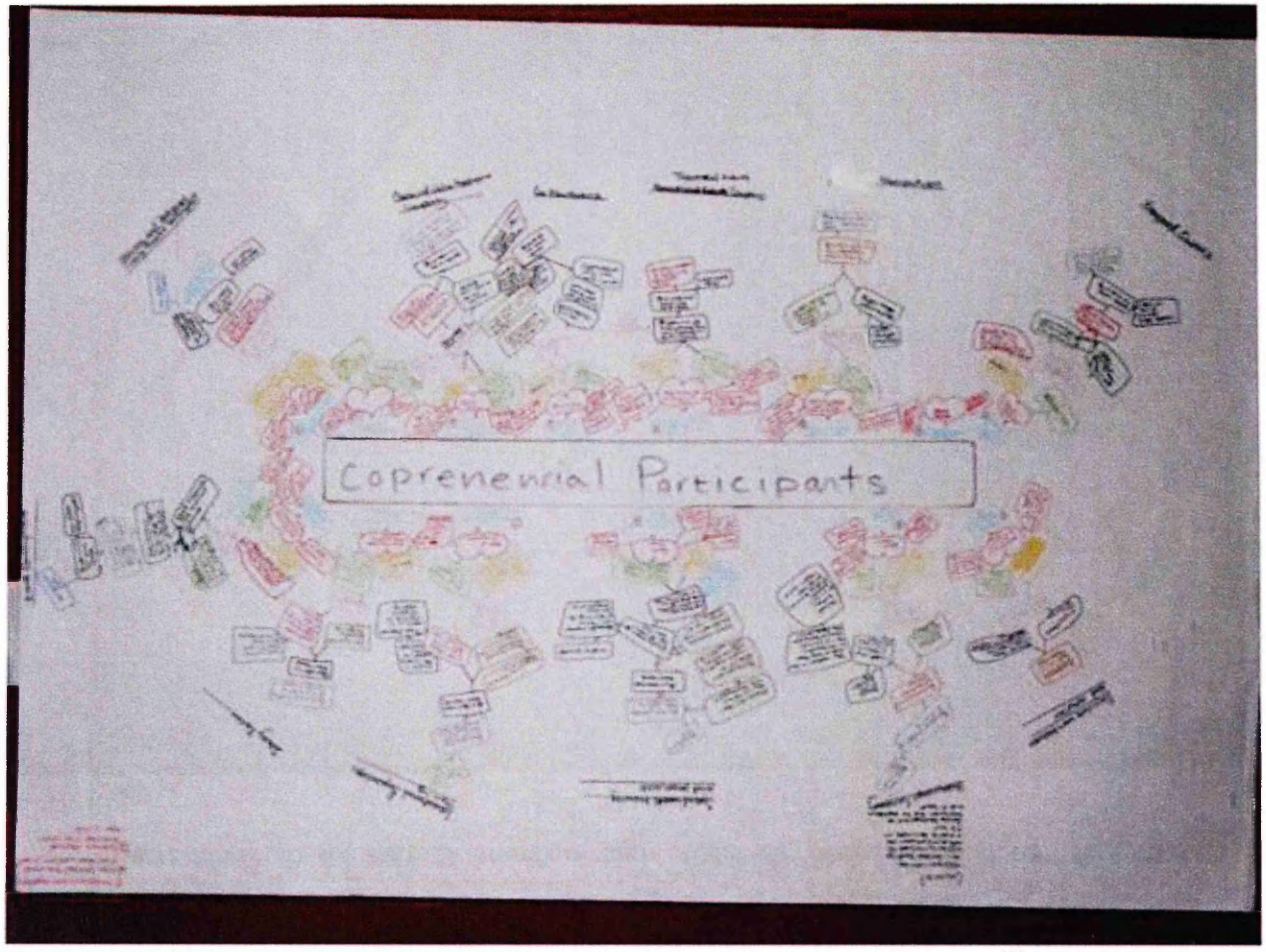
Tammy was much more vocal than Edward was and appeared to tell most of the story with Edward interjecting when Lois had made a point about the work he was doing. The two were very much at ease with each other although Edward was constantly referring to his lap top and not giving us his full attention.

Extract 3

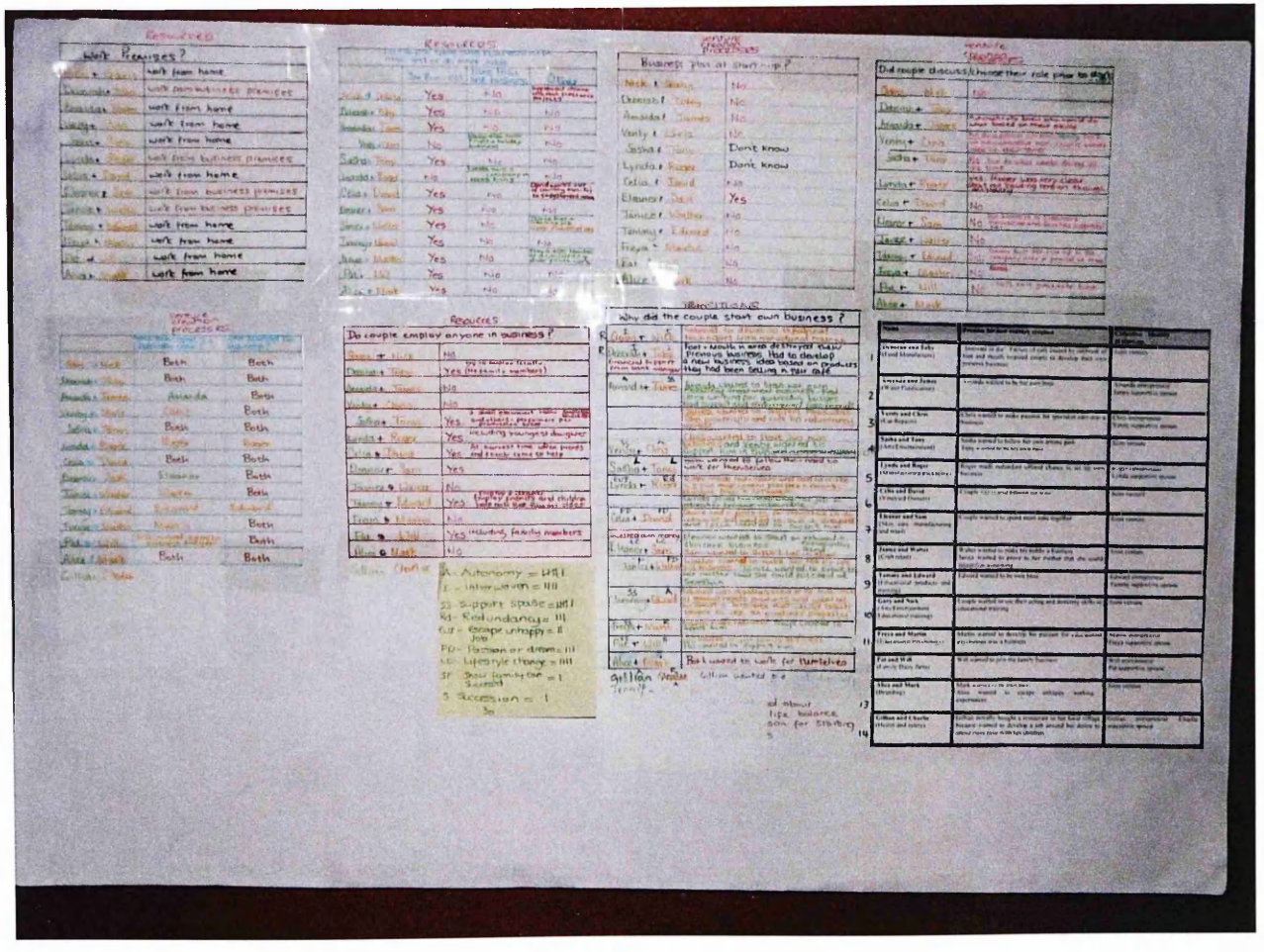
Although I kept trying to steer the conversation onto their home lives it was always brought back to work and how this fitted into the picture. They were happy with their work/life balance in that they felt very lucky that their working year fitted in with the school curriculum year, which meant that they were able to take long family breaks with their children. They had recognised that it was difficult to separate work from home bearing in mind that they were based at their home office so had now developed (as much as they could) a business free time at weekends.

I was struck by the way the couple were working together and reflected on the other interviews I had already done which also relied heavily on the woman maintaining the nurturing role both at home and at work

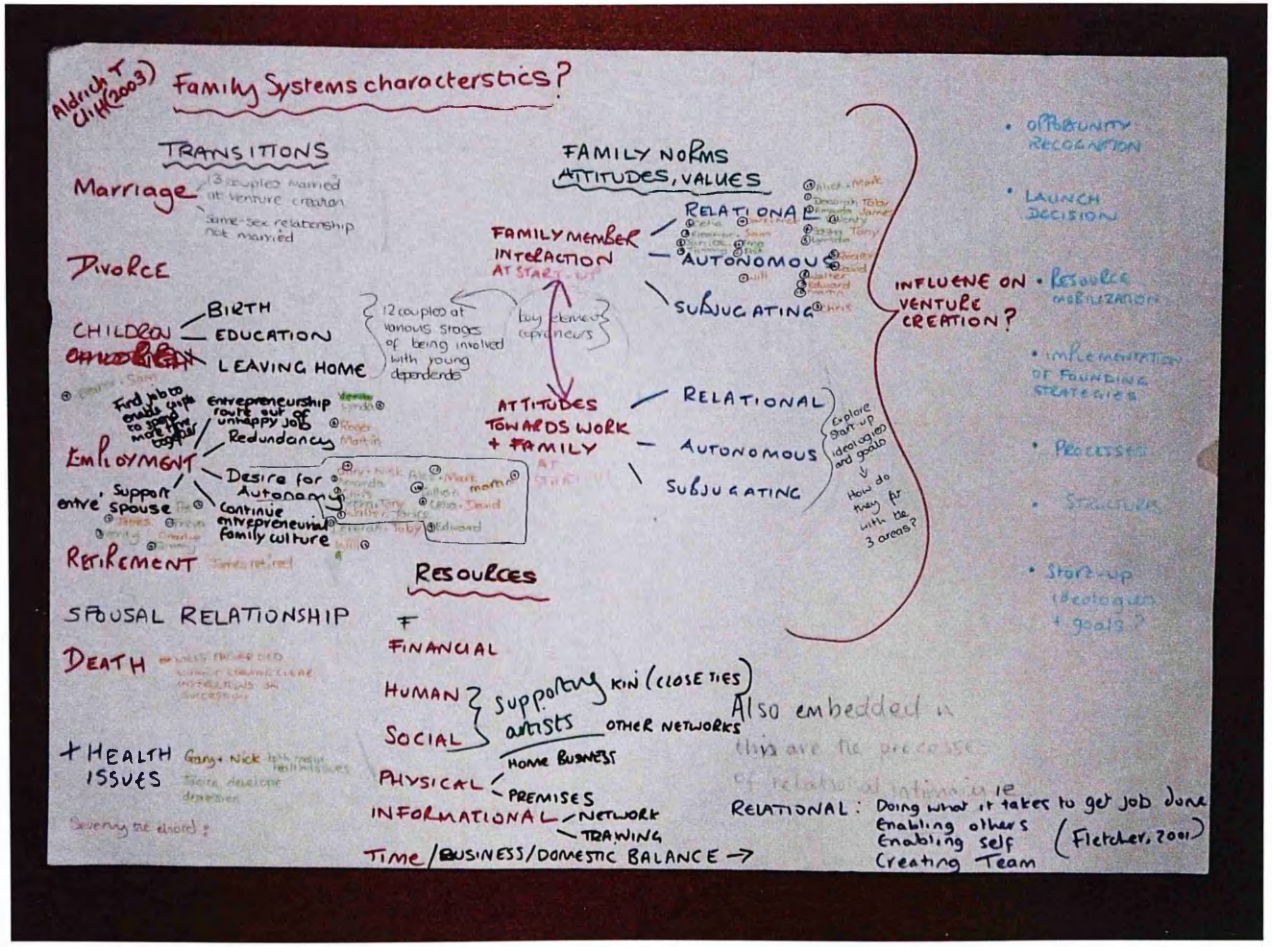
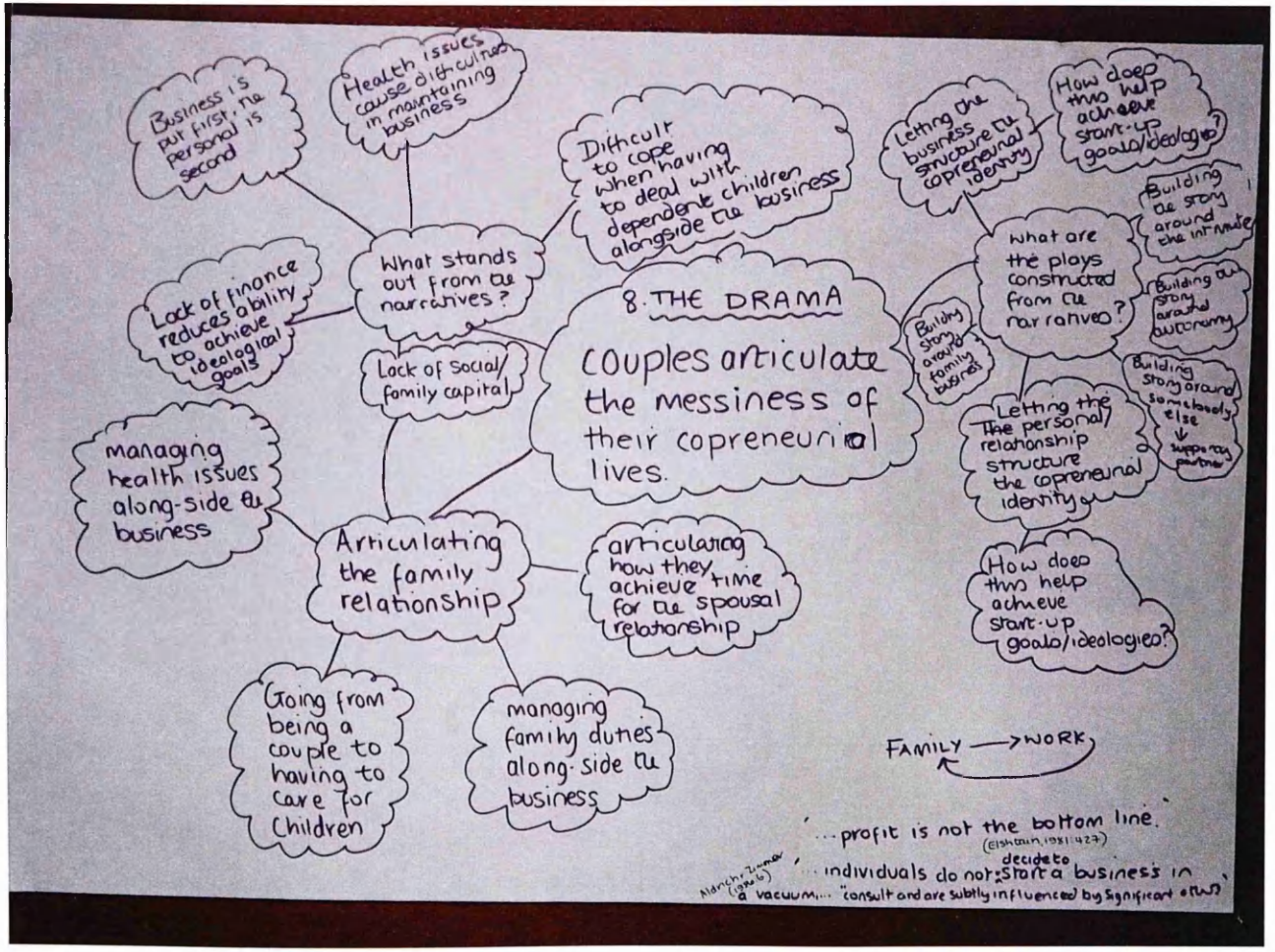
Appendix 4: Collating themes



Appendix 5: Subsumptive themes that help to identify the main super-ordinate themes for the main study


Resources
Work Premises?
Resources
Business plan at start-up?
Did couple discuss/choose their role prior to start?
Resources
Do couple employ anyone in business?
Why did the couple start own business?
Both
Amanda
Yes
No
Don't know
Yes
Yes (Necessity reasons)
Yes (including family members)
Yes (including family members)
No
Yes
Yes
Yes

Appendix 6: Family systems characteristics



Appendix 7: Making sense of the complexities of the copreneurial narratives