Rejoyce! Deliberation is at hand!
(Fictional Joyce. The genuine article is too costly for words)

. . . the possibility exists for fiction to function in truth . . .
(Foucault)

The following themes are discussed in this chapter:

1. From different perspectives on ‘Night and Day’ to the ‘Contradictions of Modernity’: the expectation of ever-increasing rationality in economic enterprise and in bureaucratic administration confronts violent outbursts of ‘irrational exuberance’.

2. The Enlightenment tradition of social science and its belief in the ‘rational actor’ find great difficulty in accounting for the role of the ‘irrational’.

3. The use of fictions, as source of emotions, restores the repressed affective dimension of society.

4. The two components – emotional and rational – are represented in Kant’s ‘trilogy of passions’, fusing imaginative truths with the existential conditions of economic ‘possession’, political ‘power’ and social values. These conditions are necessary for the production of wealth, political order and social identity; but they may take either a destructive or constructive form (power, for example, may be used cooperatively for the common good, or abused in the interest of an elite).

5. ‘Theory in Context’: the challenge of change, through economic innovation, war, internal unrest. Stimulating conditions (inspirational or traumatic) provoke an emotional reaction, which then has a social
impacts. Such is the theme, in economics, politics and society (vision and division), of the following chapters.

Night and day

The mysterious ‘night world’ of feelings and emotions, of hidden or unconscious desires, is sharply contrasted in the Western mind with the day world of rationality and logic, definition and calculation. Indeed, the distinction goes back to ancient Greece, when mythos (fable, myth) yielded to logos (reason, the word). Joyce’s procedure is the reverse: the largely day-world of *Ulysses* – a journey of self-discovery – merges into the night-world of *Finnegans Wake*: dream-history of humanity. The Chinese tradition, too, differs from that of the West. The *yin* and *yang* – also symbolising night and day – are equally perceptions of the female and male principles, negative and positive, cold and hot, dream and reality; but to the Chinese these are complementary rather than antagonistic. In their view, neither dimension is to be excluded in the world of humanity. As a Chinese philosopher argues, Chinese thought is not directed solely at the intellect, but at the whole person – less to argue rationally than to practise how to live (Chen, 1997: 34; and on *yin/yang*, 253–5).

Western rationality versus Oriental mysticism? Rather, I argue that despite the Enlightenment conception of progress and reason driving out prejudice and superstition (and other barbarous forms of irrationality) nevertheless emotional behaviour thrives. Paradoxically, the very prophet of rationality, Max Weber (1948), also accounts for the force of ‘unreason’: that is, the ‘warring gods’ of conflicting values that go beyond – and cannot be reconciled by – pure reason. But can we, as Weber suggests, isolate the sphere of reason (his ‘ethic of responsibility’) from that of emotionally-charged values? In my view, this is an illusion. The realm of ‘magic’ – dreams, myths, values and fictions – does not merely coexist with that of reason, but permeates it at all levels. Together, they form the imaginative truths of our existential condition, conceptualised in the Kantian trilogy of possession, power and ‘esteem’: the latter being interpreted as consciousness of oneself and one’s place in society. These are the themes I seek to develop in this introductory chapter.

Contradictions of modernity

The founder of modern sociology, Max Weber, was convinced that ‘disenchantment’ – the end of myth and magic – would inexorably result from the growth of ever more rational and bureaucratic systems of economy,