This chapter first addresses the following question: what are realists realistic about? It then turns to examine American realism. The focus is on the theories of Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr, Karl Llewellyn, and Jerome Frank, and examines the Scandinavian realists: Alf Ross and Karl Olivecrona. Both ‘schools’ seek to demystify law by questioning the use and meaning of abstract concepts such as ‘justice’, ‘commands’, ‘norms’, and so on. Instead they have adopted an empirical, pragmatic approach to law and the legal system. But they differ in several material respects. These distinctions are examined, and their respective standpoints and methodologies criticized.
6. Legal realism

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