I distinguish the metaphysical thesis, Realism, from any semantic thesis. Anthony Appiah agrees with me that "the metaphysical thesis is what many traditional arguments are really about" (RR: 65). However, he disagrees in seeing this thesis as, in part, implicitly semantic.

In my paper, I allow that Realism is "a little bit epistemological" in that it denies that the world is dependent on what we believe (ARD: 53). Appiah is quite right in thinking that, in a similar negative respect, Realism is a little bit semantic too. So that is not what our disagreement is about.

I think that no semantic claim, aside from this little bit, is constitutive of Realism. However, Appiah overstates my point in describing it as the view that Realism "should make no difference to our semantical beliefs" (RR: 68). This leads him to see disagreements where there are none. Different metaphysics can make different semantics seem plausible or implausible; in particular, Realism can make verificationism seem implausible. Similarly, different semantics can make different metaphysics seem plausible or implausible; in particular, verificationism can make Realism seem implausible (ARD: 54–55). There are ways of arguing from a position on the one issue to a position on the other. And, of course, as Appiah indicates (RR: 72), one might mount an argument that has conclusions on both issues; say, verificationism and antirealism. Knowledge is a seamless web, as Quine told us long ago. Everything in the web can make a difference to everything else. All of this is beside the point being criticized, for that point is about what Realism is, not about the arguments for it or from it.

Our first real disagreement comes with Appiah's argument that a certain semantic theory — a truth-conditional theory including a causal theory of reference — does entail Realism (his "Big-R Realism") (RR: 70–71). I do not see the force of his argument. On this theory, as he
says, "it is hardly surprising . . . that most of the terms succeed sometimes in referring to something" (RR: 70). Nevertheless, the theory does not entail this. Furthermore, it does not entail that any particular term refers, hence not that any particular entity exists. In brief, it does not yield the existence dimension of Realism. Further still, it does not yield the independence dimension. So it could hardly be further from entailing Realism. Of course, if we add the two dimensions of Realism to the semantic theory, then it entails Realism. But if we added the doctrine of the Trinity, it would entail that too.

"Fig-Leaf Realism" is committed only to their being something "out there." Realism is committed to entities of certain types being "out there." Which types? Appiah's main disagreement with me comes with his argument that the only way we can identify the relevant entities is as the referents of our representations.

What is the problem? I identify the entities by giving some examples: stones, trees, cats, electrons, muons, curved space-time, atoms, and molecules. I call such entities "common-sense, and scientific, physical" entities in my statement of Realism (ARD: 45). What is unclear about that? If a person has difficulty catching onto the idea, I could continue the list, right to the end if necessary (1984: 19). Or I could say a word about how we construct the list: we look to our best science and common sense. For, we have good reason to believe in the existence of entities that our best science and common sense say exist. There is no genuine problem identifying the entities that Realism is committed to.

This having been said, I have no objection to identifying the entities using reference, as Appiah wants. We could state Realism as follows:

Realism#: Most referring expressions of common-sense, and scientific, theories refer to objective and mind-independent entities

However, first, this no more makes Realism semantic than does stating it as Realism* (ARD: 45—46). And Appiah agrees that Realism* does not make Realism semantic (RR: 65). Where Realism* uses deflationary truth, Realism# uses deflationary reference. That is to say, Realism# requires a notion of reference no stronger than one that makes all appropriate instance of

\[ e \text{ refers if and only if } a \text{ exists } \]
hold. (Appropriateness is a matter of synonymy, as before: what is substituted for ‘e’ must name an expression that is synonymous with what is substituted for ‘a’.) Deflationary reference is a logical device that involves no commitment to any substantive semantic thesis about the representational properties of language. Indeed, it is compatible with an eliminativist semantics (like Quine’s, for example).

Second, though Realism# is unobjectionable, it is no advance over Realism. If there were a genuine problem of identification in the latter case, there would be an analogous problem in the former. Someone might ask Appiah which expressions in which theories concern Realism#. Appiah could give some examples, just as I did before of entities. Someone who doggedly refused to understand how, and on what basis, I would continue the earlier list could be just as difficult with Appiah and his list. And I would be sympathetic if Appiah felt more than a little bit impatient with such doggedness.

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Department of Philosophy
University of Maryland
College Park, MD 20742
U.S.A.