SEMANTICS & "PHILOSOPHY"

Origin: Gr. semantikos, significant from semainein, to signify.
Definition: Pertaining to meaning in language.
Subtleties of meaning, often used derogatorily.

What might be the reason that some people respond negatively to someone being specific and exact about the words they are using in order to convey a particular sense or meaning? What might provoke someone to say, "You're only using semantics."?

Well, it could be that the listener does not want to deal with the reality of the meaning of the words they are hearing, but only their illusion as to what they have allowed themselves to think they mean. For example:

What do most people think the word 'sophisticated' means? How about, well-bred, well-educated, knowing how to behave well in public, exercising good taste, up-market, suave, poised, etc.? Would you accept some of those, or what would you say it means?

The dictionary says of 'sophisticated', having acquired worldly refinement, urbane, cultured, elaborate, suitable for or appealing to the tastes of sophisticated people.

The dictionary says of 'sophisticate' is to cause to become less natural or simple, to be more worldly wise, to make less true, genuine or honest, corrupt pervert, or adulterate.

The root of sophisticated comes from the Middle English sophime, from the Old French sophisme, from Latin sophisma, from Greek sophizesthai, acquired skill, clever device, to play subtle tricks.

'Sophist' Any of a class of ancient Greek philosophers active during the second half of the 5th century B.C. who specialised in providing instruction in ethics and the art of public speaking. and came to be disparaged for their oversubtle self- serving reasoning and devious argumentation. These mostly perverted men were skilled in 'sophistry', a plausible but misleading or fallacious argument. So it sounds good, but it is false.

Now I wonder if that has anything to do with philosophy! Philosophers are looked up to as respected thinkers, who form the bases of educated thought. Aren't they?

Definition: Philosophy, Love and pursuit of wisdom by intellectual means, the investigation of causes and laws underlying reality. Inquiry of things based on logical reasoning. The system of values by which one lives.

Definition: Philosopher, A student or specialist in philosophy. A person who remains rational and calm even under the most trying of circumstances.

Origin: Gr.Philosophos, "loving wisdom" philo-love sophos-wisdom! But we read the meaning of sophos under sophistry as clever, skilled in specious argument, false reasoning, trickery.

Even dictionaries fall into defining a word according to its popular usage, choosing to ignore the negative aspects of the root upon which it is based.