ABSTRACT
Since the mid-20th century, "metaphysics" has become something of a dirty word - especially in scientific circles - and, some would say, with good reason! Kant's 'categorical imperative' did nothing to prevent Germany perpetrating the worst atrocities of the century, and Nietzsche's "Ubermensch" seems almost to condone it. British "Logical Positivism" (1920s-30s) turned out to be a self-defeating failure; and European postmodernism (1960s-80s) was little more than an elaborate hoax [Sokal, 1994]. And, worst of all, Quantum Mechanics has sent contemporary metaphysics into a veritable tailspin! All in all, it's probably fair to say that 20th-century philosophical thought has been lacklustre at best, and scientists are probably right to have nothing to do with it. Well, almost. In this presentation I shall argue that for all its failings, dismissing Philosophy altogether is throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Philosophy is a broad church: a systematic rational inquiry into (1) the general nature of the world (ontology and metaphysics); (2) the justification of beliefs (epistemology); and (3) the conduct of life (ethics) [Quinton, 1995]. And while the third of these endeavours has been a demonstrable failure, I shall argue that the first two are actually central to any system of knowledge and/or understanding, including Science. I shall, therefore, advocate the salvaging of at least one small branch of Philosophy - euphemistically dubbed "Philosophy for Science" (and disparagingly dubbed "neo-Scholasticism" [Ladyman & Ross, 2007]) – and show how a little carefully considered ontology (theory of existence) and epistemology (theory of knowledge) can bring renewed clarity even to a rigorously 'scientific' account of human existence in a physical Universe.

BIOGRAPHY
Tibor Molnar originally studied Chemical Engineering at UNSW in the 1960s, but then forged a career in computer software and Information Science. Retired in 2003, he turned his attention to further study, and after more than a decade of Ontology, Epistemology, Logic, Physics, Quantum Mechanics, and the Philosophical Foundations of Science, he now teaches these subjects at the University of Sydney's CCE and the WEA. A book is also on the way.