CONCLUSION
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So far we had a descriptive and analytical look into the ontology and epistemology of Spinoza, and Marx and Engels. Then we did a comparative study of these in the last concluding chapter. And as such, this conclusion is only a brief sum up of what we have taken up and attempted to accomplish in this study.

1. Spinoza (1632-1677) could not get proper recognition in his lifetime as a seminal thinker. It was Hegel who revived him and brought out his real intellectual standing before the philosophy audience. A continuity of thought can be seen from Spinoza through Hegel to Marx and Engels. Marx (1818-1883) and Engels (1820-1895) not only represented the time but also gave revolutionary insights for the future which could turn many things upside down. Such a thought cannot exhaust its possibilities of recurrent rethinking on it, and it still continues to develop.

1.1 The continuity of thought makes it possible to compare the systems of Spinoza and Marx-Engels. Similarities, differences and the
developmental aspects are visualised as the content of comparison. A renewed probe into the commonplace treatment of Spinoza as a pantheist is thought of, and a new materialist reinterpretation of Spinoza on Marxist lines is aimed at. It is also decided to point out the embryonic premises of Marxist school of thought in Spinoza.

1.2 The main features of the method used in the study are as follows: (i) The ideas are to be subjected to the basic philosophical questions like whether they conform to materialism or idealism. (ii) The vision of differentiated oneness of epistemology, logic, ontology and methodology is to be kept up throughout the study. (iii) The socio-historical setting of the philosophers in question is to be analysed to know its role in shaping the ideas of the respective thinkers. (iv) A review of the thought systems is to be taken up in the light of the latest scientific data to measure the relevance as well as the outdatedness. All these characteristics make it possible to call our method a Marxist one.

1.3 Another important question is that of treating Marx and Engels together. Despite minor differences in emphasis, Marx and Engels
essentially have the same position; they together
founded the Marxist philosophy. Attempts to
'dehyphenate' Engels from Marx by onesidedly
exaggerating their differences would be questioned.
Ye another issue is the vindication of materialism.
This would be done through a review of the concept of
matter and materialist epistemology in the light of the
new advances in science.

2. It is difficult to fit Spinoza's ontology
in a definite frame of characterisation. Based mainly
on his major work *Ethics*, we have tried to analyse the
ontological concepts in Spinoza.

2.1 Substance is the central ontological term
in Spinoza's philosophy, though in different contexts
he equates it with God and Nature. Substance is "that
which is in itself, and is conceived through itself". Spinoza
starts with axioms in an Euclidean manner and
derives the detailed features of his central concept.

God is the efficient cause of all; it is
causa sui. It is same as Nature.
Nature is passive (Natura Naturata) as well as active
(Natura Naturans). Spinoza allows only one Substance; and the relative substances in Descartes are demoted to attributes.

2.2 By attribute, Spinoza means "that which the intellect perceives as constituting the essence of substance". Thought ("thinking thing") and extension ("extended thing") are the only attributes we know out of the infinite attributes of God.

Modes are "the modifications of substance". To Spinoza, the whole reality means the substance and its modifications. There are infinite, immediate, eternal modes as well as finite, mediate modes. Motion and rest under the attribute of extension, and intellect under the attribute of thought are infinite modes. Intellect is finite mode as well. Bodies and ideas are concrete finite modes respectively of extension and thought. Spinoza's modes have no existence outside the substance, while Leibnizian monads are independent and self-sufficient. Man is unique mode constituted of both the attributes - body under extension and mind under thought.
2.3 The difficulty in characterising Spinoza as either a materialist or an idealist lies in the fact that he does not give any priority to either extension or thought. But this problem can be solved when we look at him from the epistemological angle. When we see that the mind in Spinoza is a psychological totality of ideas and that the reflection of object in the subject is a development of the physical process of interaction between bodies including the human body, we can understand the materialist basis of his philosophy. Spinoza is rightly taken a materialist by Marx and Engels. Spinoza is predominantly metaphysical than dialectical.

Spinoza is a panentheist (everything-in-God-ist), and not a pantheist (God-in-everything-ist) in the strict sense as is usually thought of.

3. Spinoza's epistemology holds the key to his method, theory of truth, and concept of freedom besides his ideas about mind, cognition and knowledge. Ethics and On the Improvement of Understanding are the two main works of Spinoza on which this study of his epistemology is based.
3.1 Spinoza talks of four basic modes of perception and three levels of knowledge. Knowledge is either adequate or inadequate. Perceptions arising from hearsay and signs (first kind) and that from mere experience (second type) give rise to opinion - inadequate ideas, the first level of knowledge. Third is the inference of essence. This gives rise to a knowledge through causality or syllogism. This is actually reason, the second level of knowledge. The fourth type of perception is the immediate perception of essence which we get in intuition, the third and last level of knowledge. The adequacy is maximum here. Mind is active in the adequate stages of perception. Human body is affected by external bodies, and mind becomes aware of this and the effects from the resultant interactions. Thus, cognition is a material reflection in the subject mind.

3.2 For Spinoza, truth is manifested in the second and third levels of knowledge. Falsity in the level of opinion constitutes partial truth. Reason and intuition distinguish truth from falsity. Truth is subjective essence representing the objective reality. Mind's highest virtue is to know God which is the truth, the highest certainty. This is the intellectual love of God. Freedom is an attainment of this stage where
emotions are in control. This can only be a necessary and natural development. Everything follows as necessity as the properties of a triangle follow from the very nature of it. Freedom also is a development of necessity. Ethics, truth and freedom converge in Spinoza. Method is an instrument of intellect; it is "reflective knowledge, or the idea of an idea." As truth itself is the criterion of truth, method also ends in truth and in identity with all others like freedom or blessedness and intellectual love of God - the highest truth and the highest good.

3.3 The common belief that Spinoza is a rationalist is misplaced. He is neither a rationalist nor an empiricist. He stands in between Descartes and Locke. Spinoza accepts innate capacities, not innate ideas. Spinoza, like Locke, believes that all men are born ignorant. Reason in Spinoza develops out of the generalisation of experience. Thus, in Spinoza, we find both induction and deduction.

4. In Marx and Engels, ontology is taken as a single one which is same in young or mature Marx as well as in Marx or Engels.
4.1 Authors like Lukacs, Schmidt and Kolokowski take material reality only as a socially mediated category. Different from this the essential independence of matter from mind and society is what is accepted by Marx. Nature is taken broader and prior to man and human consciousness. Society and consciousness emerge out of matter/nature through evolution. Marx's naturalism or humanism in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* is only the new materialism which he founds along with Engels. Actually, there is no counterposition between the historical materialism and dialectical materialism or between Marx and Engels.

4.2 Matter is the universal or essence of reality. Matter is inseparable from motion. Matter in motion gave rise to nature, man and society, and consciousness. The active side of man is also part of the objectivity. Unity of thinking and being is the immediate basis of thought and knowledge. Human consciousness develops out of a long history of practice, the human labour. Man is natural, biological, social and historical. Consciousness is basically social. Man alters nature, and nature in turn man too. History and thought are bound to material reality.
4.3 The whole reality has a rhythm in its development. This is the materialist dialectic expressed in the motion of matter, laws of nature, development of consciousness, reflection of reality in the subject, laws of logic within the subject, etc. Dialectics is the link of all these realms. Motion in the object, motion in the subject and the subject-object dialectic have the same laws behind. These are the laws of materialist dialectics: (i) the law of transformation of quantity into quality and vice versa, (ii) the law of interpenetration of opposites, and (iii) the law of the negation of the negation, all framed by Engels and accepted by Marx and the Marxists in general.

5. Though Marx and Engels did not propose an epistemology in a professional manner, their observations and comments together make up a consistent epistemology. Lenin codifies the Marxist epistemology.

5.1 Dialectics, ontology, epistemology and logic coincide in Marx and Engels. Dialectics is the common point that unites truth, method, thought and reality in Marx and Engels. Practice, the purposive human activity, is conceived as an objective activity also. They consider our ability to know or not as a
practical question, not a theoretical, scholastic one. Practice in Marxism is the human activity, labour, that creates and reflects the reality. Practice is also the testing ground of truth. Marx's famous dictum that the question, however, is to change the world, and not just to interpret it is meaningful in the context of the special role of practice in Marxist epistemology.

5.2 Knowledge is historical and relative. Error and truth are relative. Relative truths make up the absolute truth. Conscious reflection is the cognitive process - the subject-object dialectics - in Marx and Engels. The reflection of reality into a system of knowledge represented by sensations, concepts and categories of relations and things in motion, and its correspondence to reality are not a passive case of one to one parallelism, but of a dialectical case of active interaction between subject and object, concrete and abstract, truth and error, knowledge and ignorance, synthesis and analysis, induction and deduction and the like.

5.3 Marx's method is dialectical and materialist. It is materialist in contradistinction to Hegel's. In the method of Marx and Engels, the historical and the logical are converging; i.e., the
method is "the reflection, in abstract and theoretically consistent form, of the historical course"; it is nothing but the logical reflection of history. But, how is it done? Go from appearance to reality, to the real, unconnected simples (analysis), and build, from these abstract, simple, discrete concepts, the complex, rich, concrete concepts (synthesis). In total, this method is the ascent from abstract to concrete, as well as a movement from appearance to essence. In this method, dialectic of concrete and abstract, analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, simple and complex, ascent and descent, historical and logical, and appearance and essence are very visible.

5.4 Categories are expressed in all areas of the Marxist thought. Categories represent reality. Just in the chapter on 'Dialectics' in Dialectics of Nature itself, Engels introduces an array of categories: quantity and quality, positive and negative, part and whole, simple, compound and complex, identity and difference, equal and unequal, necessity and chance, abstract and concrete, individuality, particularity and universality, induction and
deduction, analysis and synthesis, matter and motion, cause and effect, finite and infinite, and appearance and thing-in-itself. Here, Engels also talks of "reciprocal action" and transformation of "mutual opposites". Not only that categories represent reality but also that they are interdependent, they develop, and as such they are historical.

5.5 Marx and Engels takes Spinozaist and Hegelian understanding of freedom as the recognition of necessity. Freedom is not just a mental activity in Marx and Engels; it is a social and historical process of fulfilling the natural needs of human society, thereby achieving the social liberation of man from the clutches of exploitation.

5.6 In our view, Marx is neither a rationalist as Colletti thinks, nor an empiricist as Jendrich considers. Practice, in Marxism, has a role of mediating all the dichotomies which would have otherwise expressed onesidedly. Reflection theory of cognition and the correspondence theory of truth in Marx and Engels support the materialism of their epistemology.
6. A short critique of dehyphenation of Marx and Engels, a vindication of materialism in the light of the latest scientific developments, an exhaustive comparison of Spinoza with Marx and Engels and a dialectical assessment of Spinoza to see the Marxist elements in him are the important areas that constitute the concluding chapter of comparative assessment.

6.1 The differentiation attempt of writers like Levine in contrasting the "dialectical materialism of Engels" with "historical materialism of Marx", or the "dialectic of nature" in Engels with "dialectic of action" in Marx has taken them to the same social reductionist position of Lukacs, Schmidt and Kolokowski. Levine talks of the social antecedence and social a priori as a point of demarcation in Marx. Levine questions also the objectivity of dialectical laws. Levine is actually mistaken as Marx along with Engels sticks to the question of the essential independence of nature and its laws, and as they take man and society as a development out of matter and nature, and the logical laws as a reflection of the objective laws.

6.2 The latest discoveries in quantum physics which explain field, forces, waves, vacuum etc. in terms of matter in motion or as a dialectic of matter
are only defending the materialist ontology in general. The explanations in psycho-physiology about adaptive mechanisms, reflex activities induced by stimuli, signal communications within the nervous system, the development of the second signalling system of speech through the biological and social evolution of human beings, the answers in the genetic science like the hereditary informations as a sum total of the historical development of the species and the material basis for subsequent evolution, and the codification of this hereditary wealth in a single fertilized ovum which can blossom into an individual according to either the set genetic programme or the mutation of this, and the realization in the eco-science of the need of a symbiosis of the biosphere and technosphere, etc. point at the essential independence of nature, our dependence on it and the interaction between man and nature.

The achievements in the cybernetic and system sciences like the interaction between the material objects leading to the ability of reflection, the active restructuring ability of living systems, the activity understood as an ability to anticipate and foresee, selective movement in living systems, systems that possess memory reflection, etc. point at the
materialist origin of reflection and thereby that of epistemology itself.

6.3 Born of Jewish Dutch immigrant parents, Spinoza grew up in the social milieu marked by post-Renaissance and counter-Reformation. Feudal breakdown of Western Europe, emergence of Holland and England as centres of navigational powers, and the political triumph of bourgeoisie clothed in the Calvinist and Lutheran revolts against the Catholic system, etc. developed a new economic and political system. Spinoza was with the new class against the Spanish feudal control over Holland. On the other hand, Marx and Engels grew up in the period of working class struggles against bourgeoisie.

Spinoza preferred democracy to aristocracy and monarchy. Some sort of a 'social contract' concept seems to be implicit in his understanding of civil society. Marx and Engels brought in the concept of social humanity or human society in the place of 'civil' society. They preferred scientific socialism and communism to bourgeois democracy.

Spinoza was with the Dutch patriotic war against Spain. That means, he was with the capitalism
against feudalism. Hence his criticism of Scripture and Catholic ideals. Marx and Engels also participated in the bourgeois democratic events of 1848-'49 and, for this reason, had to settle outside their native nation.

6.4 Science also had a role in shaping the ideas of Spinoza and Marx and Engels. The invention of telescope and microscope gave further informations about the planetary system through the discoveries of Galileo, Gilbert and Copernicus. The results influenced all the modern philosophers, Spinoza being no exception. Marx and Engels also were influenced by the scientific discoveries like the one by Darwin, as Engels has acknowledged this. Spinoza took science and knowledge basically as an effort to understand the cause and effect relation. To Marx and Engels, science is a weapon to arrive at the essence from the appearance.

6.5 To both the systems of thought, matter and motion are uncreatable and indestructible. To Spinoza, substance is *cause sui*, to Engels, it is *causa finalis*. Matter is not caused by anything outside the matter. Motion or rest in Spinoza is comparable to matter and motion in Marx and Engels. Though dialectical beginnings like the reciprocity of cause and effect
(e.g., causa sui) can be seen in Spinoza, further conceptualisation of the laws of dialectics takes place only in Marx and Engels. Interconnections between various forms and modes of matter in Spinoza become interchangeability and interpenetration in Marxist dialectics.

6.6 Man is a unique mode, composed of both extension and thought but of the same substance. In Marx and Engels, matter itself is shown evolving into mind. The metaphysics in Spinoza takes man only as a natural and biological being. The dialectics in the latter takes man as social and historical also. All these thinkers consider rightly the potentiality of reasoning and purposive activity as factors differentiating man from animals. The historical evolution of mind is not shown in Spinoza.

6.7 Subject, object, and subject-object interaction in epistemology is the same in both the schools. Spinoza's concept of consciousness as the subjective apprehension of the object bodies takes him closer to the reflection theory in Marxism.

In synthesising induction and deduction, a priori and a posteriori, Spinoza, Marx and Engels have common views. But the factors of history and
sociology of knowledge in Marx and Engels constitute an advance over the concept of knowledge in Spinoza.

6.8 In Spinoza, few categories emerge, though different from the conscious subjection of these in Marx and Engels. Freedom as category is the development of necessity in all these thinkers. But, in Marx and Engels, freedom is not just a mental act, but a social and historical liberation.

6.9 Let us sum up the dialectical, i.e., the Marxist elements in Spinoza. (i) Though the law of interpenetration of opposites is missing, the interconnections of the multitude of modes constituting a single whole, many constituting one, is seen in Spinoza. A consistent objective monism, where truth, method and knowledge are identical, is available in all the thinkers. (ii) Even though no materialist teleology is developed by Spinoza, and it could blossom only in Marx and Engels, the human purposive activity that stands on a materialist footing takes its origin in the former. (iii) The reflection theory of cognition and subject-object dialectics in their primitive expressions can be seen in Spinoza. (iv) Categories including their reciprocity as seen in cause and effect emerge in Spinoza. (V) Freedom as
recognised or understood necessity is a contribution of Spinoza.

Spinoza's metaphysics lies in (i) not providing a social and historical explanation to many of his concepts and in (ii) not giving an evolutionary explanation to mind or consciousness as emerging out of matter itself.