An Anarchist Mother's Ache

Fíona Vivienne

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Introduction

I'm at my favorite café, seated outdoors with the ocean waves as my backdrop, captivated by a man busking with a battered yet beautiful typewriter. Its rhythmic clatter blends seamlessly with his anarchic energy, his wild gestures, and his daring style.

Something about him stirs my thoughts, circling me back to the case of Luigi Mangione, a fellow vilified as much for his assumed politics and privilege as for the murder of a CEO.

The setting before me compels me to write about the dualities of motherhood and anarchist rebellion.

Éternel combat de l'amour !

A Mother's Heart and the Anarchist Deed

To speak of *propagande par le fait* is to summon both thrill and mournful reflection, like a mother hearing the distant toll of a funeral bell while her child dances in the garden.

Historically, propaganda of the deed has been fraught with as much passion as misunderstanding, willfully misunderstood not only by those outside but also by those within anarchism. From the fevered brilliance of Luigi Galleani's writings in Cronaca Sovversiva to the echo of bullets in Sacco and Vanzetti's America, the deed has been both lionized and damned.

L'Art de la Révolte

To be clear, propaganda of the deed is not mere destruction but a creative act: the birth of shocking alarm to awaken slumbering masses. Galleani, whose works danced with dynamite and uncompromising beauty, saw the deed as the poetics of annihilation, an art form that speaks to the heart, bypassing the majority's "reason." For the Galleanists, the deed was not merely a strike against tyranny but a beacon of courage, illuminating paths to freedom for the oppressed.

Pour moi, the tragedy of *le geste anarchiste* lies not in its violence but in its reception, mangled by statist propaganda and misunderstood by a public still shackled to the rigid moral framework of the bourgeoisie.

To understand the current Luigi, one must first disentangle the romanticized past from the brutal present. This brutal present is one defined by an unprecedented chasm between the corporate elite (backed by the state) and the struggling masses, a society in which corporate monstrosities dictate the terms of existence. It is a time when health itself has been commodified, with medical CEOs profiting obscenely from illness, leaving the vulnerable abandoned in their callous system. Capitalism marches on with predatory tactics, from planned obsolescence to algorithmic manipulation, squeezing every ounce of profit from the exploited. Surveillance, that not-so-silent oppressor, pervades every corner of life, reducing freedom to a quaint memory as the state and corporations collaborate to monitor, control, and, yes, abandon you.

As a reminder, the architects of this grim present continue to thrive behind guarded, gilded walls.

Class Politics: Une Médiocrité Morale!

The enigmatic, wealthy Mangione replacing the impoverished, laboring immigrant wielding dynamite to demand dignity is, apparently, a contradiction too far for some of today's "anarchists." Perhaps they fail to grasp the truth of rebellion: the deed is not about class, creed, or conformity.

Here, I must pause to cast aside the weighty banalities of class politics with a haughty flick of my wrist. The obsession with *conscience de classe*, with the proletariat as some sacred monolith, leaves me uninterested and cold. The dogma of class struggle, always heavily draped in the tedium of liberalism and Marxist rhetoric, is an insult to the freedom of the individual.

Let these groups chatter endlessly about collective liberation; I remain unmoved.

Pourquoi? Because class consciousness demands I prioritize a fabricated identity over my unique Self. It presumes to subsume my desires, my rebellion, my Self into the faceless mass of "the people." But I am not "the people" nor part of their dull and tacky machinery. I am *moi-même* and will never exchange my sovereign ego for their phantom of solidarity.

Class struggle is merely the avatar of morality, a hierarchy of its own, demanding allegiance to a collective identity, which is always the lowest common denominator.

Does it matter to me whether Luigi Mangione was rich or poor, privileged or oppressed? Not in the least. To frame his deed through the lens of class politics is to diminish its essence. *L'acte se suffit à lui-même.*

In an age where rebellion is dissected through the lens of identity and ideology, Luigi Mangione offers a stark reminder that the essence of the deed transcends these constructs.

Mangione: The Formerly Wealthy Pariah

Luigi Mangione, a young man who, for a time anyway, walked amongst the elite and had access to the type of wealth that insulates one from the suffering that, historically, bred anarchists, stands accused of a deed that ignites shock and admiration. The CEO's murder was swift and executed with the precision of one unburdened by doubt.

And yet, I am reading various people in the circle-a world, of all places, arguing over his legacy.

Some want to dismiss him outright, citing his privilege, his so-called "heterodox" or "grey" politics, or his failure to articulate an anarchist framework for his act. "He doesn't understand history; he is NOT an anarchist," one complained… as if the dynamite of Galleani or the bombs of Ravachol were wielded by scholars instead of human beings driven to the edge by their desires.

It is absurd to demand purity of ideology from anyone, let alone the perpetrator of a deed. Mangione's wealth and status may seem anathema to the downtrodden anarchist of yore, but this misses the point entirely. His upbringing and access do not negate the boldness of his actions.

I don't know about you, but I don't measure the authenticity of rebellion by the poverty of a rebel but by the clarity of their will.

And who among us can deny Luigi Mangione's will to act?

An Anarchist Mother's Ache

I do not waste my thoughts on his positions or causes, nor do I consider the so-called crime. The state—*cet instrument de domination*—is the true crime. My eyes do not see the murder of a CEO as anything more than an inevitable collision with power.

As a mother, I see a young man who is now caged like an animal. My heart aches not for the CEO but for Mangione, whose suffering in prison will now, almost certainly, be endless. In this "mother-thinking," however, I must turn to face my reflection in *le miroir de la contradiction…*

To say I ache for him because now life will be difficult implies a kind of condescension, *non ?* As though Luigi did not know the consequences of his act! As though he needs my maternal concern to complete his humanity!

It is better to leave pity, which always creates its own hierarchy of understanding, in the fire where it belongs. Wondering whether or not he underestimated the state's punishment for his deed is also none of my business. I do not presume to define his motives or his awareness.

I know only this: my heart aches for the youth in him, for his own daily life, and yes, I celebrate the demise of power that his act represents.

I see the art in Mangione's deed, too, a rebellion that echoes through history, connecting him to so many others. I also see the boy he once was, now conceivably condemned to live out his days in a cage.

These feelings exist simultaneously; neither negates the other, as la condition humaine is complex and contradictory.

While many (mostly internet voices) continue hammering out their Collective Positions, I sit by the ocean, watching the anarch-poet busking away.

His presence stirs a question: "Is it for joy or need?"

Whatever his answer, for all his chaos and daring, I feel an overwhelming urge to take everything that is mine and lavish it upon him. At last, my busking agent of chaos answers, grinning with much theatrical flair: "Is it for joy or need? It's for both reasons, m'lady!"

His response lingers as I return to my thoughts of the accused, Luigi Mangione.

I remind myself, *ce ne sont pas mes affaires.* His deed was his own, and I am left not to mourn but to celebrate the audacious blow struck against the monstrous edifice of corporate state power. To weep for the man and rejoice in the act that made him more than human~this paradox of joy and sorrow, of rebellion and desire, this is what lives in an anarchist mother's heart.

I am entirely at ease with that.

Let the state and its apologists tremble at the audacity of the rebel's deed. As for me, I choose to honor the chaos and desire that make us most alive, anarchic, untamed, and beautifully human.

Onward to chaos. Onward with desire.

For the Galleanisti,

~ Fiona

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Originally published in a collection of writings responding to the arrest of Luigi Mangione, issued by Bacchus Editions. Subsequently published as a standalone pamphlet by Bacchus Editions, with the original text unchanged. A Note on This Standalone Copy An Anarchist Mother's Ache first appeared in an anthology published by Bacchus Editions shortly after the arrest of Luigi Mangione. At the time, we invited writers to respond from whatever vantage point they felt compelled to write, and the result was a collection of very different voices, reflections, and arguments. This essay was my own contribution. Since its publication, I have been asked many times if this final section could be made available on its own. Readers wanted to pass it from hand to hand, carry it in a pocket, or share it without the larger volume. So here it is, now printed as a small standalone pamphlet. It remains exactly as it was originally written, in the midst of the familiar chorus of commentators anxiously debating whether Mangione was politically acceptable enough to embrace, condemn, or distance themselves from. I found those conversations considerably less interesting than the questions of rebellion, motherhood, contradiction, and freedom that became this essay. ~Fíona

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