## How toxic of Gary Lineker to use tennis ace Emma Raducanu's mixed heritage as a political football to curry favour with his Lefty Twitter mates

By Sarah Vine for the *Daily Mail*

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As the mother of an 18-year-old who has just finished her A-levels, I couldn’t help feeling a twinge of maternal concern as I watched Emma Raducanu lift that trophy at Flushing Meadows.

Like my daughter, she’s that odd mixture of woman and child — in some ways so self-assured, in others still just a baby.

That cut on her knee, bless her, didn’t help: it made her look as though she had just tumbled off a swing or fallen out of a tree.

And as the Mail reports today, there’s an added innocence in that she’s in New York supported by one of her best childhood friends.

Despite her whirlwind journey to the top, Raducanu has an almost uncanny air of composure about her, a breezy self-confidence and a refreshing, charming openness. But let’s not forget she is human, and a very young human at that.

The flawless creature we see gracing the pages of Vogue and dazzling onlookers alongside the likes of seasoned stars such as J.Lo and Rihanna at the Met Gala was, until very recently, just a schoolgirl from Bromley.

Now she is, deservedly, a global superstar — and everyone, it seems, wants a piece of her.

From fashion designers to politicians, the armies of the unscrupulous are vying to claim her for their own, desperate to piggyback on her slender shoulders in pursuit of their own self-advancement.

Take Gary Lineker. The over-remunerated BBC presenter decided the best way to celebrate her success was by turning her mixed heritage into a political football to curry favour with his Lefty Twitter mates.

Less than two hours after her victory, he juxtaposed a headline about illegal migrants being turned back to France with a picture of Raducanu, and the accompanying words: ‘Oh the irony.’

Similar tweets from London Mayor Sadiq Khan and former Labour spin doctor Alastair Campbell homed in on Raducanu’s background, using her — quite shamelessly (and, in Khan’s case, without even the courtesy of spelling her surname correctly) — to stoke the flames of identity politics.

In a nutshell, the fact that Raducanu is half-Chinese, half-Romanian and was born in Canada means Home Secretary Priti Patel is wrong to try to impose limits on the number of people arriving illegally across the English Channel.

This is idiotic. If anything, her parents’ situation shows that it is possible to move to the UK and obtain British citizenship legally, regardless of where you come from — and that this country provides ample opportunity for success to all-comers with the determination to succeed.

What’s really shocking is how these powerful men felt they were entitled to exploit her success.

By praising her in their own very narrow political terms, by dragging her into their petty tribal squabbles, they’ve made their position clear: Raducanu’s success is not really hers to celebrate, but theirs to hijack for their own purposes.

They are nothing but revolting vampires, feeding off this young woman’s vitality and talent. And they are by no means alone.

In the weeks and months to come, the queue of bloodsuckers attracted by her success will grow only longer. No doubt she will experience some wonderful moments — after all, a trip down the red carpet at the Met Gala is every young woman’s dream. But let’s not forget there’s a darker side to all this.

Emma Raducanu is a beautiful, fresh talent. The likes of Lineker can keep their toxic nonsense to themselves.