

## **COMMENT | A strange case of Dr M Jekyll and Mr M Hyde**

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COMMENT | Make no mistake, Dr Mahathir Mohamad's recent remarks are not the mere ravings and rantings of a senile old man. They are a well-calculated attack on our already wounded body politic. And this attack bears all the hallmarks of the perpetrator's split personality.

And for a quick insight into split personalities, there is no better tale than Robert L Stevenson's classic, 'The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde'. It can be seen as an unintended allegory on the horror and drama of Malaysian politics.

In the tale, Dr Jekyll uses a self-concocted serum to change himself into someone else, a Mr Hyde. Even his closest friends cannot recognise Mr Hyde as the altered Dr Jekyll - the perfect disguise that fools everyone all the time.

And the moral code of that 'other': Mr Hyde is at polar ends with Dr Jekyll. The reason: Dr Jekyll wants to indulge in the vices of Victorian London without being detected but he yearns to be seen by society as a good and caring doctor.

Replace 'Malay politics' with self-concocted serum and we are on our way.  
Replace Victorian London with Kuala Lumpur and we are even closer to home.  
Replace Dr Jekyll with Dr M Jekyll and Mr Hyde with Mr M Hyde and we are truly home.

Transformed thus, Mr M Hyde becomes a sociopath - evil, self-indulgent, utterly uncaring of anyone but himself. In that state only three things mattered to him - I, Me, and Myself. Only his own views, concerns, and feelings mattered!

In Stevenson's tale, Mr Hyde becomes increasingly violent. He tramples upon a young girl and later still cruelly beats up an MP to death with a heavy cane. More frightening still, he is consumed by these violent urges which he can no longer control.

And each time, Mr Hyde gets away with his crime by drinking a home-brewed potion to become the good Dr Jekyll again. This potion also helps him keep a tight handle on his secret. Society continues to see him as the doctor with the cure.

We return to our Mr M Hyde who has taken complete control of Dr M Jekyll. The monster now calls all the shots. Mr M Hyde's excesses continue unabated. He steals the future from the poor and attacks the rich for not funding his excesses.

Seeing his dangerous and deadly plan coming to an inglorious end, Dr M Jekyll

tries to work things out with Mr M Hyde. But Mr M Hyde reminds Dr M Jekyll thus: "Remember, you were as much a part of me as I was a part of you."

### **Split personality disorder**

Dr M Jekyll is now left with few choices. The creator of Mr M Hyde, who for years was the cover for Dr M Jekyll, knows that to expose the former is to expose himself. What is to be done? His split personality disorder had run its full course. Habis! Finito!

Worse still, the potion he had liberally used to reverse the changes seen in Mr M Hyde and which had fooled the masses for decades into thinking that he was at all times the good Dr M Jekyll no longer worked. There was no place left for Mr M Hyde to hide!

And Mr M Hyde, who by now cared little for Dr M Jekyll, could not shake off the latter's old traits - lust for money, power, and a cherished legacy as a hero. Besides, our Mr M Hyde has a high-flying family unlike the original Mr Hyde who was not a family man.

The months turn to years. Residing in one body, their minds at odds, the solution to his dilemma finally dawns on Dr M Jekyll. But is he man enough to overcome his hubris and tell all Malaysians the truth as a parting gift for future generations

and to history?

In the original tale, they find Dr Jekyll, his body terribly contorted, dead on the floor of his lab, still wearing Mr Hyde's clothes, an apparent suicide. A letter, more of a confession really, ties up the loose odds and ends.

With bated breath, we await the next episode of 'The Real Malay Dilemma'.

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