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### **Who wrote the Jack the Ripper letters? A forensic linguistic analysis**

In 1888, a number of prostitutes were murdered in Whitechapel, London and the perpetrator(s) were never caught. However, in the 209 letters that were received before and after the events, the murderer allegedly identified himself as 'Jack the Ripper', a name that is to this day associated with the case. These letters were key in providing an evocative name to the press and in creating the persona of Jack the Ripper, still alive today in the form of books, movies, plays, and tours. Despite their impact, these letters are unlikely to be genuine. Historical evidence suggests that the two most important of these letters responsible for the creation of 'Jack the Ripper' were fabricated by journalists with the aim of selling more newspapers, with the later ones probably written by hoaxers after the police decided to make these two public. The present paper reports on a forensic linguistic analysis aimed at identifying which of the 209 letters allegedly attributed to Jack the Ripper were written by the same person. The results support the hypothesis that the two most important earliest letters were written by the same person and that a third letter, the 'Moab and Midian' letter, can be connected to these two. This letter is controversial as some suggest it might have been fabricated by journalists at the Central News Agency. The implications of these results have a wide-ranging impact, from the Jack the Ripper case itself to its socio-cultural dimensions, forensic linguistic methods, and the understanding of other genuine letters from serial killer.