Stylometric analysis reveals who in the QAnon management writes with a style similar to the style of the recent QAnon messages released in 2022

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Summary:

This contribution determines who in the QAnon management team uses a writing style similar to the style Q3 of the QAnon messages published in June 2022 after more than 18 months of silence.

Stylometric analyses conducted late 2020 by OrphAnalytics experts determined in our 1st White Paper 1 (OrphAnalytics 2020) that the QAnon corpus is written in two different styles, Q1 and Q2, each of the two styles being associated with one of the two forums which successively published QAnon: the first messages using the style Q1 were posted on 4chan, and the remaining messages were published on 8chan/8kun were written with the style Q2.

In the 2nd White paper released in early 2022 (OrphAnalytics 2022), the two styles Q1 and Q2 were compared to the styles of six candidates who managed QAnon publication on both websites between late 2017 and late 2020. Independently confirmed by the group of l'École des Chartes of Paris, our stylometric results were used in an article of the New York Times (Kirkpatrick, 2022). This stylometric analysis reveals that, while the style Q1 is cooperative, i.e. while some sequences being similar to those of Paul Furber and Ron Watkins, the Ron Watkins' style is similar to the style Q2.

Presented in this contribution, the complementary stylometric analyses carried out on the very last messages Q3 of QAnon clearly reveals that within the team of QAnon management, Ron Watkins writes with the closest style to the one used in Q3. No new messages were published later.

Taking all the information together, it clearly appears that, within the group of the six candidates, Ron Watkins' style is the closest to the style of the great majority of the messages Q2 and Q3 of the QAnon messages.

Ron Watkins was very likely resuming the writing of QAnon during the preparation of his candidacy to the Republican primary (August 2, 2022) for the Arizona's 2nd Congressional District CD2 hold for the midterm elections 2022 for the US House of Representatives. Ron Watkins ranked last to this primary election and was next spotted at that time in Australia.

Introduction

Anonymous messages were published on two forums successively - respectively first on 4chan and then on 8chan. The latter forum became 8kun after the shutdown of 8chan in 2019 following the publication of the manifestos of three mass shootings: Christchurch NZ, Poway Ca, El Paso Tx, respectively in March, April and August 2019.

Signed with the pseudonym Q, the ANONymous messages form the corpus QANON which gathers supporters convinced that the writer Q is a high ranking American officer with access to Q-level nuclear information who alerts the American people to putative excesses, notably pedophile, of an elite secretly governing the world.

The author(s) of the anonymous messages were sought within the historical group of six QAnon management people identified by several media investigations (e.g. Zadrozny & Collins, 2018; Wang & Click, 2020): 1) the South African Paul Furber, 4chan manager as 2) Coleman Rogers; 3) Rogers' wife Cristina Urso; 4) Tracey Diaz who boosted the media coverage of QAnon published on 4chan, 5) Jim Watkins owner of 8chan/8kun and 6) his son Ron, IT manager of the latter site. None of the six suspects clearly admitted to be Q, i.e. the author of QAnon.

Most of the QAnon messages were published on the 8chan/8kun site. In order to be published on this forum, the messages had to be authenticated by a tripcode. Only Jim and Ron Watkins as owner and IT manager of the 8chan/8kun forum would have known who the author Q would have been if they were not the QAnon contributors.

Partial confessions retracted in front of a camera (Hoback C, 2021; *Q*: *Into The Storm*, a six-part documentary series of HBO) partially confirmed the hypothesis that Ron Watkins was the author of QAnon (Harwell & Timberg, 2021).

Our style analysis of QAnon performed during the 2020 US presidential election was publically released three weeks before the January 6 Capitol Hill riots (OrphAnalytics 2020). The results show that the QAnon corpus is divided in two styles: the style of the messages Q1 published on 4chan forum, and next, the style of the messages Q2 posted on 8chan/8kun.

A style analysis publically released in early 2022 (OrphAnalytics 2022) was able to determine who among the six people involved in the QAnon publication management writes with the style closest to that of the Q- messages. The first style Q1 associated with 4chan is cooperative: at least two putative authors appear, i.e. Paul Furber and Ron Watkins (OrphAnalytics 2022). The 4chan forum makes cooperative writing possible because it does not require authentication for publication: everyone could have the first Q messages.

Contrarily to 4chan, the publication of QAnon messages on 8chan/8kun was only possible after authentication. The style closest to the style Q2 is Ron Watkins' (OrphAnalytics 2022). Our stylometric findings were strongly supported by results independently obtained by the team of the École des

Chartes (Cafiero & Camps, 2022).Both stylometric results were used in the New York Times article of last February (Kirkpatrick, 2022).

After 18 months of silence, the publication of new messages (June 2022) raises again questions about the writing of this corpus. In order to answer them, complementary stylometric analyses were conducted for this White Paper with our methodology used for the second White Paper which enabled us to determinate who, among the six candidates of the QAnon, writes similarly to the author of the very last QAnon messages publically released in June 2022.

Material and methods:

The texts analyzed in the 2nd White paper enriched with the five new Q-drops compared with the political program of available on Ron Watkins' website, his messages posted on Telegram in May and June 2022 and his sonnet published in late February 2022. The texts used in this White Paper are available on request for science analyses.

Similarly to the 2nd White Paper, all texts are cut to the target size of 5000 characters. The 299 sequences of reference and questioned texts of 2nd White Paper are ordered according to the rolling stylometry of Figure 3 of 2nd White Paper and new texts are introduced after the 299 sequences of 2nd White Paper. The six concatenated sequences - i.e. put end to end - are added in the following order: 1) the 5 new Q-drops published recently this year, 2) the political program published on Ron Watkins' website, 3) Ron Watkins' May telegram messages, 4) and 5) those of June, and 6) Ron Watkins' sonnet created and published in reaction to the New York Times article which was based on the attribution results of the two stylometric teams (Kirkpatrick, 2022).
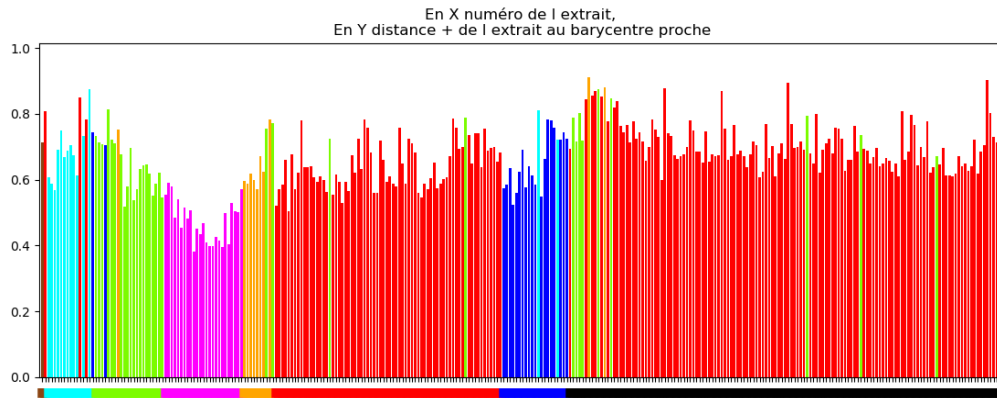
Trigrams are the elementary units of this analysis: 26 different characters and one word separator constituting 27^3 (or 19683) different trigrams. All the text sequences are defined by a point in the trigram space of 19683 dimensions in which each dimension correspond to the frequencies of one particular trigram.

The stylometric analyses conducted on reference and questioned texts are the rolling stylometry which measures the distance between each text sequence to the barycenter of reference styles in the trigram space.

Results:

The left part of the rolling stylometry of Figure 1 is a calibration: the results for the 167 reference texts attributed to a colored cluster are identical to Figure 3 of the 2nd White Paper. The precision is estimated at 92.8% or 155 correct attributions for 167 reference texts.

The right part of Figure 1 presents the results for the questioned texts Q1 and Q2. As expected, the latter results are also identical between Figure 3 of 2nd White Paper and Figure 1 of this White Paper. The six final results concerning the last analyzed sequences treated in Figure 1 of this White Paper are new.
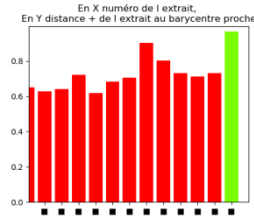
Figure 1: Style comparison of questioned texts with selected reference sequences of 6 authors represented by 7 different styles.

The first part of Figure 1 corresponds to the calibration/training. **Calibration:** *The six suspects' 5'000 chr sequences appear horizontally from left to right: 2 sequences from Coleman Rogers in brown (#1-2), then 15 from Jim Watkins in cyan (#3-17), 22 from Cristina Urso in green (#18-39), 25 from Paul Furber's group B in magenta (#40-64), 10 from Paul Furber's group A in orange (#65-74), 72 from Ron Watkins in red (#75-146), and finally 21 in blue from Tracy Diaz (#147-167).* **Next investigation:** *the questioned sequences: the sequences of Q1 (#168-183) and Q2 (#184-299), the last Q-drops published in June 2022 (#300), the political program of Ron Watkins (#301), the telegram messages of Ron Watkins posted in May and June 2022 (#302 & 303-304), the sonnet written by Ron Watkins in reaction on the NYT article of February 20, 2022 (#305).*
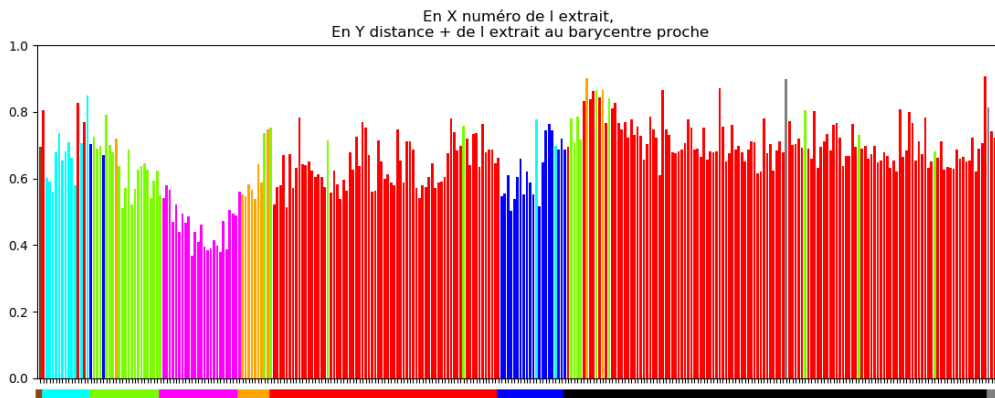
Each questioned (138/305) or reference sequence (167/305) is colored according to the closest seven reference styles. For each 305 comparison, quadratic Euclidean distances are calculated with the seven barycenters of the established reference groups. For a sequence belonging to one of the seven reference styles (167 sequences), the barycenter of its cluster is recalculated by ignoring this particular sequence. The shortest distance determines the color of the sequence bar, and its height corresponds to the shortest distance normalized by the average of the distances prevailing between the seven barycenters.

A precision rate for Figure 1 on the calibration part can be estimated corresponding to that established in Figure 3 of 2nd White Paper: 92.8 % or 155 correct attributions for 167 reference sequences. The 16 sequences of Q1 appear to present a collective style: 2 sequences are from Paul Furber (PFA), 6 from Cristina Urso, 8 from Ron Watkins. Most of Q2 sequences appear to be closest to Ron Watkins' style (113/116).

Figure 1bis: Zoom of Figure 1 showing the 12 last sequences used in Figure 1: the 6 sequences of Ron Watkins (#294-299), the last Q-drops published in June 2022 (#300), the political program of Ron Watkins (#301), the telegram messages of Ron Watkins posted in May and June 2022 (#302 & 303-304), the sonnet written by Ron Watkins in reaction on the NYT article of February 20, 2022 (#305). All questioned texts present a style closest to Ron Watkins except that the Urso's style appear to be closest to the sonnet.

For details concerning the very last drops of QAnon, see Figure 1bis. Five of the six new sequences are associated with the Ron Watkins' style of the White paper: 1) the new Q-drop (#200), 2) the Ron Watkins political program (#201), the Ron Watkins telegrams of 3) May and 4) & 5) June (#202-204). Only the sonnet (#205) published by Ron Watkins has a different style, the closest of which in the group of 6 suspects is Cristina Urso.

Figure 2: Style comparison of questioned texts with selected reference sequences of 6 authors represented by 8 different styles.
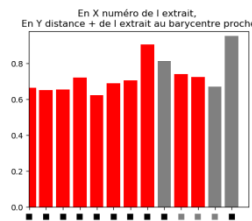
The first part of Figure 2 corresponds to the calibration/training. The six suspects' 5'000 chr sequences are those of Figure 1 distributed in 7 styles. Another reference style is added in gray: the Telegram messages of Ron Watkins posted in May and June 2022 (#302 & 303-304). The questioned sequences are those of Figure 1. Results are shown as in Figure 1.

A precision rate can be estimated corresponding to that established in Figure 3 of white paper 2: 91.8 % or 156 correct attributions for 170 reference sequences. The precision rate is affected in this case that two reference texts of Ron Watkins' telegram (2/3) present a style similar to the references texts in red of Ron Watkins used in White Paper 2.

The left part of Figure 2 mostly corresponds to the calibration of the algorithms: 8 reference styles or left, the seven used beforein Figure 1 and right, the three gray sequences of Ron Watkins style on Telegram (#302 & 303-304).

The precision is estimated at 91.8% or 156 correct attributions for 170 reference texts. If both styles of Ron Watkins are taken together, the precision rate is slightly higher 92.9% or 158 correct attributions for 170 reference texts.

The right part of Figure 2 mostly corresponds to the results for the questioned texts Q1 and Q2. The latter results are also almost identical between Figure 1 of this White Paper and the Figure 3 of 2nd White Paper . Only the results concerning the last sequences in Figure 2 are sensibly different. For details, see Figure 2bis.

Figure 2bis: Zoom of Figure 2 showing the 12 last sequences used in Figure 2. The 6 sequences of Ron Watkins (#294-299), the last Q-drops Q3 published in June 2022 (#300), the political program of Ron Watkins (#301), the Telegram messages of Ron Watkins posted in May and June 2022 (#302 & 303-304) and the sonnet written by Ron Watkins in reaction on the NYT article of February 20, 2022 (#305).

In Figure 2bis, the results show that, while the last Q-drops published in June 2022 (#300) presents a style closest to the Ron Watkins' text used in the 2nd White paper 2, the political program of Ron Watkins (#301), and the sonnet (#305) written by Ron Watkins in reaction on the New York Times article of February 20, 2022 appears to be similar to the style of the Telegram messages of Ron Watkins posted in May and June 2022.

The three reference sequences of Ron Watkins' telegram (#302 & 303-304).are closest to both Ron Watkins' Style: while May's and early June's Telegrams (#302-303) are closest to the Ron Watkins' style of White paper 2, late June' telegrams (#304) are closest to themselves.

Conclusion

Our stylometric results Figure 1 using 7 styles of 6 candidate reveals that the style of Ron Watkins'used as reference in White Paper 2 is the closest to the last five Q-drops, the political program of Ron Watkins, the telegrams of Ron Watkins posted in May and June 2022.

The precision of 92-93 % established by the calibration of the rolling stylometry enables us to propose that 1) Ron Watkins is the better candidate in the group of QAnon management to write like QAnon, for most of messages (i.e. Q2 and Q3), if Ron Watkins writes a message similar to the last QAnon messages, our stylometric analyses would conclude that the style of Ron Watkins is identical in our conditions to the style of the messages Q2 and Q3 of QAnon.

Only the Sonnet released by Ron Watkins in reaction to our White Paper 2 needs to refine the analysis using the late messages on Telegram of Ron Watkins as a second reference (Figure 2). Thus this complementary analysis, confirms that, in the group of six candidates involved in the management of QAnon, Ron Watkins is writing with the closest style to the large majority of Q-drops, posted on 8chan/8kun.

As Ron Watkins was in charge of the authentication of Q-drops posted in 8chan/8kun, he had in the past and even now the opportunity to publish Q-drops as Q on the forum of his father. The publication of new Q-drops could have appeared essential last June to Ron Watkins, as he tried to be elected in early August to primary of the midterm election to the US Congress.

Different media asked him if he had written the last QAnon messages Q3: for instance the New York Times asked him after the publication of three QAnon messages if he was the author. Ron Watkins declined to answer (Thompson, 2022).

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Annexes

Last Q drops:

4954
Shall we play a game once more?
Q

4955
It had to be done this way.
Q

4956
Are you ready to serve your country again?
Remember your oath.
Q

4957
Who was "Jane Roe"?
How do you control generations of a populace?
50 years of conditioning.
50 years of propaganda.
50 years of lies.
Peaceful protests?
Riots?
"Summer of Love" redux?
What happens when you corner an animal?
Midterms.
[D] power implosion.

Q4958
What is at stake?
Who has control?
SURPRISE WITNESS.
Who was surprised?
Who will be surprised?
Use your logic.
Can emotions be used to influence decisions?
How do you control emotion?
Define 'Plant'.
How do you insert a plant?
Can emotions be used to insert a plant?
Who is Cassidy Hutchinson?
Trust the plan.
Q