

**From “Who’s S-S-Scared?” to “Zoinks!”:  
*Scooby Doo* and the Embrace of Technology through the Rejection of the Supernatural**

Saturday mornings of my childhood always included the cartoon *Scooby Doo*, which premiered in September of 1969. Requested by Fred Silverman, the head of daytime programming at CBS, *Scooby Doo* was meant to be a high school version *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis*, with the addition that the characters played in a band together and solved mysteries. There was to be a horror feel about the show, since Silverman was a huge fan of horror films. William Hanna and Joseph Barbera’s writers’ first attempt was a literally version of Silverman’s request: A band consisting of five members who solve crimes between gigs, and their dog Too Much. After revision, the show, titled *Who’s S-S-Scared?*, was rejected by CBS executives for being too scary. It was rejected a second time for being too boring. The final version was based on the dog character, bring comedy into contrast with the “scary,” and Silverman suggested the name of the new dog star be the scat line from Frank Sinatra’s “Strangers in the Night”, “doo-be-doo-be-doo.” *Scooby Doo* had its beginnings, crushing its competition when it premiered, and 48 years later, it’s still going strong.

In this paper, I explore one reason for the cartoon’s success. I argue that through *Scooby Doo*, Hanna-Barbera and later Warner Bros, are exploring the same fears of industrial revolution – including technical and digital revolution - that Mary Shelley explored in *Frankenstein*. In the preface of the third edition of *Frankenstein* in 1831 Shelley asked herself, ‘How did she come to think of and dilate upon so very hideous an idea?’ While *Scooby Doo* is clearly not “hideous,” the question concerning why the writers would explore ghost, monsters, and aliens, goes beyond Silverman’s love of horror movies. In this paper, I posit that *Scooby Doo* is the modern version of Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. Throughout the series, the writers are addressing societal fears of technology through the veil of the supernatural. However, their approach to addressing these concerns becomes a subversive way of reinforcing the revolutionary element. This happens through the lens of the teenagers, since we all know how the villains “would have gotten away with it, too, if it wasn’t for you meddling kids.” It’s the “meddling kids” who show how the supernatural is only ever a use of technology; if society embraces the technology, the scary supernatural ceases to exist, and fears of the technology are replaced with the appreciation of the technology.