

✿ 外刊阅读第 12 篇

People are worried that AI will take everyone's jobs. We've been here before.

MIT Technology Review

By David Rotman

January 27, 2024

难度指数：★★★★☆

✿ 原文阅读

P1: It was 1938, and the pain of the Great Depression was still very real. Unemployment in the US was around 20%. Everyone was worried about jobs.

P2: In 1930, the prominent British economist John Maynard Keynes had warned that we were “being afflicted with a new disease” called technological unemployment. Labor-saving advances, he wrote, were “outrunning the pace at which we can find new uses for labour.” There seemed to be examples everywhere. New machinery was transforming factories and farms. Mechanical switching being adopted by the nation's telephone network was wiping out the need for local phone operators, one of the most common jobs for young American women in the early 20th century.

P3: Were the impressive technological achievements that were making life easier for many also destroying jobs and wreaking havoc on the economy? To make sense of it all, Karl T. Compton, the president of MIT from 1930 to 1948 and one of the leading scientists of the day, wrote in the December 1938 issue of this publication about the “Bogey of Technological Unemployment.”

P4: How, began Compton, should we think about the debate over technological unemployment—“the loss of work due to obsolescence of an industry or use of machines to replace workmen or increase their per capita production”? He then posed this question: “Are machines the genii which spring from Aladdin's Lamp of Science to supply every need and desire of man, or are they Frankenstein monsters which will destroy man who created them?” Compton signaled that he'd take a more grounded view: “I shall only try to summarize the situation as I see it.”

P5: His essay concisely framed the debate over jobs and technical progress in a way that remains relevant, especially given today's fears over the impact of artificial intelligence. Impressive recent breakthroughs in generative AI, smart robots, and driverless cars are again leading many to worry that advanced technologies will

replace human workers and decrease the overall demand for labor. Some leading Silicon Valley techno-optimists even postulate that we're headed toward a jobless future where everything can be done by AI.

P6: While today's technologies certainly look very different from those of the 1930s, Compton's article is a worthwhile reminder that worries over the future of jobs are not new and are best addressed by applying an understanding of economics, rather than conjuring up genies and monsters.

✿ 思考题

What is the main argument of this passage?

- A. AI will cause massive unemployment and economic collapse.
- B. Historical cases show that technological change leads to job destruction rather than creation.
- C. Technological transformation requires collaborative efforts to facilitate workforce transition.
- D. The skills required for new jobs in the AI era are no different from those of the past.

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✿ 外刊笔记

P1: It was 1938, and the pain of the Great Depression was still very real. Unemployment in the US was around 20%. Everyone was worried about jobs.

那是 1938 年，大萧条的痛苦依然真切。美国的失业率在 20% 左右。每个人都担心工作。

P2: In 1930, the prominent British economist John Maynard Keynes had warned that we were “being afflicted with a new disease” called technological unemployment. Labor-saving advances, he wrote, were “outrunning the pace at which we can find new uses for labour.” There seemed to be examples everywhere. New machinery was transforming factories and farms. Mechanical switching being adopted by the nation's telephone network was wiping out the need for local phone operators, one of the most common jobs for young American women in the early 20th century.

1930 年，英国著名经济学家约翰·梅纳德·凯恩斯就曾指出，我们“受到一种新疾病的折磨”——他称之为“技术性失业”。他写道，节省劳动力的技术进步“正超越我们为劳动力寻找新用途的速度”。这样的例子在当时似乎随处可见：新机器正在改造工厂和农场。美国电话网络采用的机械交换

----- 1 -----

【固】the Great Depression

大萧条：指 1929 年开始并持续到 1930 年代的全球经济严重衰退期，其特点是通货紧缩和普遍失业。

unemployment n. 失业人数，失业率；失业

【固】be worried about 担心，忧虑

----- 2 -----

prominent adj. 重要的，著名的；显眼的；高耸的

economist n. 经济学家

【固】be afflicted with 患有某种疾病或问题；为…病所折磨

disease ①n. 疾病；恶习 ②v. 传染，使…有病

outrun v. 超过；跑得比…快；从…逃脱

pace ①n. 速度；节奏；一步 ②v. 踱步；为…领跑；为…设定节奏；调整节奏

labour ①n. 劳动；任务；劳动力；工会；（英国）工党 ②v. 劳动；努力做；费力地行进；误以为 ③adj. 工党的，支持工党的

machinery n. 机器；机制；装置

transform ①v. 使转化；变换 ②n. 变式；转换规则

switch ①n. 开关；突变；切

系统，正逐渐淘汰本地电话接线员这一 20 世纪初美国年轻女性最常见的职业之一。

P3: Were the impressive technological achievements that were making life easier for many also destroying jobs and wreaking havoc on the economy? To make sense of it all, Karl T. Compton, the president of MIT from 1930 to 1948 and one of the leading scientists of the day, wrote in the December 1938 issue of this publication about the “Bogey of Technological Unemployment.”

那些使许多人的生活变得更轻松的令人印象深刻的技术成就，是否也在摧毁就业机会并对经济造成严重破坏？为了弄清楚这一切，麻省理工学院（1930 至 1948 年在任）校长、当时顶尖科学家之一的卡尔·T·康普顿，在 1938 年 12 月号的本刊上写了一篇关于“技术性失业的恐惧”的文章。

P4: How, began Compton, should we think about the debate over technological unemployment—“the loss of work due to obsolescence of an industry or use of machines to replace workmen or increase their per capita production”? He then posed this question: “Are machines the genii which spring from Aladdin’s Lamp of Science to supply every need and desire of man, or are they Frankenstein monsters which will destroy man

换 ②v. (用开关) 打开，关闭；(使) 改变，转变；调换

adopt v. 收养；采纳

【固】wipe out 淘汰；擦去；彻底摧毁

operator n. 操作员；经营者；接线员

common ①adj. 共同的；常见的；普通的，平凡的 ②n. 公共用地；常识；平民

3

impressive adj. 给人印象深刻的，令人钦佩的

destroy v. 破坏；杀死；彻底打败，击溃；使垮掉

wreak v. 造成（巨大的破坏或伤害）；施行（报复）

havoc ①n. 灾难，混乱 ②v. 严重破坏

【固】wreak havoc 造成巨大破坏

【固】make sense of 理解，弄懂

president n. 总统；院长，主席；（公司）董事长，（银行）行长

issue ①n. 议题，争论点；期，号；分配；发行；流出，发出 ②v. 发表，颁布；分发；正式发行

publication n. 出版，发行；出版物；刊登，公布

4

obsolescence n. 过时；淘汰，废弃

【固】per capita 人均；按人均计算

pose ①v. 造成，引起；提出（问题）；摆好姿势；（~ as）假扮，冒充；装腔作势 ②n. 姿势；故作姿态

genii n. 守护神；鬼，神灵；对某人有很大好/坏影响的

who created them?” Compton signaled that he’d take a more **grounded** view: “I shall only try to **summarize** the situation as I see it.”

康普顿开始说，我们该如何思考关于技术性失业的争论——“由于工业的**过时**，或使用机器替代工人或提高他们的**人均**产量而导致的失业”？接着他**提出**了这个问题：“机器是**从科学的阿拉丁神灯中跳出来**满足人类一切需求和欲望的**精灵**，还是它们将成为弗兰肯斯坦式的怪物，摧毁创造它们的人类？”康普顿表示，他将采取一种更**理性的**观点：“我只打算试图**总结**一下我所看到的情况。”

P5: His essay **concisely framed** the debate over jobs and technical progress **in a way** that remains **relevant**, especially **given** today’s fears over the impact of artificial intelligence. Impressive recent **breakthroughs in generative** AI, smart robots, and **driverless** cars are again leading many to worry that advanced technologies will replace human workers and decrease the overall demand for labor. Some leading Silicon Valley techno-optimists even **postulate** that we’re **headed toward** a **jobless** future where everything can be done by AI.

他的文章**简明扼要地**阐述了关于就业与技术进步之间的争论，尤其是**考虑到**当今人们对人工智能影响的担忧，这一讨论在**某种程度上**仍具**现实意义**。近期在**生成式**人工智能（generative AI）、智能机器人和**无人驾驶**汽车**领域**取得的令人瞩目的**突破**，再次让许多人担忧先进技术将取代人类工人，并降低对劳动力的总需求。一些硅谷的顶尖技术乐观主义者甚至**假设**，我们正**走向**一个**失业的**未来，在那里一切都可以由 AI 完成。

人（genius 的复数）；妖怪；鬼（genie 的复数）

【固】spring from 起源于；从…中跳出/涌现

grounded ①adj.理性的，理智的；接触地面的 ②v.以…为根据（ground 的过去式和过去分词）

summarize v.总结，概述

----- 5 -----

concisely adv.简明地，简洁地

frame ①v.装框架；勾勒出；围绕；诬陷；制定；（措词谨慎地）表达 ②n.框架；构架；骨架；眼镜框；基本框架；画面

【固】in a way 以某种方式，在某种程度上

relevant adj.有价值的，有意义的；有关的，切题的；正确的，适宜的

given ①prep.考虑到；如果，倘若 ②adj.规定的，指定的 ③n.假定事实

【固】breakthrough in 在…领域或问题上的突破

generative adj.有生产力的，有生殖力的；（语言学）生成的

driverless adj.无人驾驶的

postulate v./n.假定，假设

【固】head toward 朝…方向前进；走向

jobless ①adj.失业的，无业的 ②n.（the ~）失业者

P6: While today's technologies certainly look very different from those of the 1930s, Compton's article is a **worthwhile** reminder that worries over the future of jobs are not new and are best addressed by applying an understanding of economics, rather than **conjuring up** genies and monsters.

尽管当今的技术看起来肯定与 20 世纪 30 年代的技术大不相同，但康普顿的文章是一个**很有价值的**提醒：对工作未来的担忧并非新鲜事，并且最好通过运用对经济学理解来解决，而不是去**幻想**妖怪。

----- 6 -----

worthwhile adj.重要的，有益的，值得做的

conjure v.使...如变魔术般凭空出现；想象出；使浮现于脑海，使想起

【固】**conjure up** 想象出；让人联想起

❖ 长难句分析

1. **was wiping out the need** for local phone operators, one of the most common jobs for young American women in the early 20th century.

(1) 主干：Mechanical switching... was wiping out the need... (主+谓+宾)

(2) 修饰：

- 过去分词短语做后置定语，修饰 mechanical switching: being adopted by the nation's telephone network
- 介词短语做后置定语，修饰 need: for local phone operators
- 同位语，解释说明 local phone operators: one of the most common jobs for young American women in the early 20th century.

(3) 译文：美国电话网络采用的机械交换系统，正逐渐淘汰本地电话接线员这一 20 世纪初美国年轻女性最常见的职业之一。

2. To make sense of it all, **Karl T. Compton**, the president of MIT from 1930 to 1948 and one of the leading scientists of the day, **wrote** in the December 1938 issue of this publication about the "Bogey of Technological Unemployment."

(1) 主干：..., Karl T. Compton wrote... (主+谓)

(2) 修饰：

- 不定式短语作目的状语：To make sense of it all,
- 同位语，进一步解释说明 Karl T. Compton 的身份：the president of MIT from 1930 to 1948 and one of the leading scientists of the day, (and 连接的并列名词短语)
- 介词短语作地点状语：in the December 1938 issue of this publication
- 介词短语作状语：about the "Bogey of Technological Unemployment."

(3) 译文：

为了弄清楚这一切，麻省理工学院（1930 至 1948 年在任）校长、当时顶尖科学

家之一的卡尔·T·康普顿，在1938年12月号的本刊上写了一篇关于“技术性失业的恐惧”的文章。

3. He then posed this question: “Are machines the genii which spring from Aladdin’s Lamp of Science to supply every need and desire of man, or are they Frankenstein monsters which will destroy man who created them?”

(1) 主干：He then posed this question:... (主+谓+宾)

(2) 修饰：

由连词 or 连接两个并列的选择疑问分句：

- 疑问分句 1: Are machines the genii...

- which 引导定语从句，修饰 the genii: which spring from Aladdin’s Lamp of Science...

- 不定式短语作目的状语，说明 spring from 的目的: to supply every need and desire of man,

- 疑问分句 2: **or** are they Frankenstein monsters...

- which 引导定语从句，修饰 Frankenstein monsters: which will destroy man...

- who 引导定语从句，修饰 man: who created them?”

(3) 译文：

接着他提出了这个问题：“机器是从科学的阿拉丁神灯中跳出来满足人类一切需求和欲望的精灵，还是它们将成为弗兰肯斯坦式的怪物，摧毁创造它们的人类？”

4. While today’s technologies certainly look very different from those of the 1930s, Compton’s article is a worthwhile reminder that worries over the future of jobs are not new and are best addressed by applying an understanding of economics, rather than conjuring up genies and monsters.

(1) 主干：Compton’s article is a worthwhile reminder... (主+系+表)

(2) 修饰：

- While 引导让步状语从句：While today’s technologies certainly look very different from those of the 1930s,

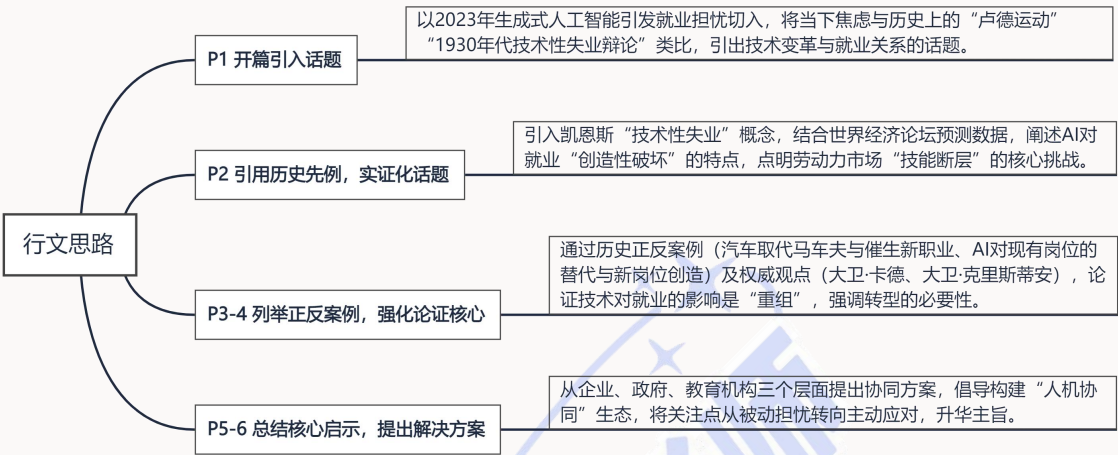
- that 引导同位语从句，解释 reminder 的具体内容：that worries over the future of jobs are not new **and** are best addressed by applying an understanding of economics, **rather than** conjuring up genies and monsters.

(worries over the future of jobs 是从句主语，**and** 连接两个并列谓语，第二个被动谓语中 **rather than** 连接两个动名词短语的对比结构)

(3) 译文：

尽管当今的技术看起来肯定与 20 世纪 30 年代的技术大不相同，但康普顿的文章是一个很有价值的提醒：对工作未来的担忧并非新鲜事，并且最好通过运用对经济学理解来解决，而不是去幻想妖怪。

✿ 行文思路



✿ 类似真题速览

真题	内容
英语二 2013 年 T1	平庸已经结束；科技取代人类工作
英语一 2018 年 T1	机器人自动化能取代人类
英语一 2019 年 T3	人工智能的思考
英语二 2024 年 T1	人工智能的不平等问题

✿ 思考题解析

What is the main argument of this passage?

- A. AI will cause massive unemployment and economic collapse.
- B. Historical cases show that technological change leads to job destruction rather than creation.
- C. Technological transformation requires collaborative efforts to facilitate workforce transition.
- D. The skills required for new jobs in the AI era are no different from those of the past.

答案：C

解析：

文章通过历史案例（工业革命、大萧条时期的技术失业）和现代数据，论证技术变革对就业的影响是“重组”而非单纯“破坏”。核心观点是：面对 AI 带来的岗位结构变化，需要企业、政府、教育机构协同合作，推动劳动力技能转型（如再培训、政策支持等）。选项 C 符合这一主旨。

• 其他选项错误原因：

- A 选项：与文章“转型而非崩溃”的观点相悖；
- B 选项：忽略了历史中技术创造新岗位的事实；
- D 选项：与文中“新旧岗位技能差异巨大”矛盾。

