The story of Dwarkanath Tagore first came to my attention in a seminar conducted by Richard Park at Berkeley twenty years ago. I was intrigued by the discovery that the grandfather of the poet Rabindranath and the father of the saintly Debendranath was an astute business tycoon who owned fleets of ships, coal mines, insurance companies, banks, and indigo plantations. At once I sensed the likelihood of a dramatic conflict between the worldly father and his other-worldly son and imagined Dwarkanath's profound disappointment when Debendranath refused to carry on the hard-won business empire. In this case research confirmed my guess. On another point, however, I was proven wrong. I had anticipated that the adulatory historians of the Tagore family had exaggerated Dwarkanath's achievements, and I was surprised to discover that he was all they had said and more. In a British-dominated business world, a Bengali Brahmin indeed stood at the pinnacle of power.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BM  British Museum  
IO  India Office Library  
KNT  Kshitindranath Tagore Collection, Rabindra Bharati University  
NAI  National Archives of India, New Delhi  
PRO  Public Record Office  
WBSA  West Bengal State Archives, Calcutta
In America, until recently, many potential poets and philosophers became businessmen . . . and the paradox is that these misplaced individuals who do not really belong are often the ones who shape the character and style of the sphere in which they operate. It was not conventional businessmen but misplaced poets and philosophers who set in motion the vast combinations and the train of ceaseless innovation which gave American business its Promethean sweep and drive. To a philosopher who finds himself immersed in a milieu of sheer action, all action will seem of one kind and he will shift easily from one field of activity to another. He will combine factories, mines, railroads, oil wells, etc. the way a philosopher collates and generalizes ideas.

Eric Hoffer,
_The Temper of Our Time._
(New York, 1964)

Why, one asks, are the Tatas unique—or nearly so? Where were the _entrepreneurs_ of the same calibre, whether Indians or Englishmen, who should have been doing what they did, and much more of the same kind, fifty or sixty years earlier?

H.N. Brailsford,
_Subject India_
(New York, 1943)