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Still-shot from the film, "The Legend of Bagger Vance," depicting the caddie (Will Smith as Bagger Vance) and the golfer (Matt Damon as Rannulph Junuh). Copyright, Allied Filmmakers, DreamWorks Pictures and 20th Century Fox, all rights reserved. Image provided as fair use for educational purposes and to acquaint new viewers with the production.

From the depths of the Great Depression appears a mystical, fictional caddie named "Bagger Vance." Who is he?

As [Steven Pressfield](#) (author of *The Legend of Bagger Vance*) has acknowledged, Bagger Vance, and the story of his legend, are based on the Hindu epic and scriptural poem, the *Bhagavad-Gita*. (Follow the link for a summary describing "the great epic of India, which, from its popularity and extent, would seem to correspond with the *Iliad* among the Greeks.")

In the epic, Bhagavan is the "Supreme Personality" who helps his follower, Arjuna, understand much about war and about life.

What did Pressfield have in mind when he created the character of Bagger Vance?

Well, I certainly didn't create Bagger. He just kind of came along on his own. Of course his original incarnation, as you know, was Bhagavan (Lord) Krishna, hence "Bagger Vance."

Knowing that Bagger Vance is a fictional character based on Hindu scriptures, the National Council of Hindu Temples is "extremely concerned" about how Bagger Vance is portrayed on screen. In a [statement](#), the [Council](#) indicated:

The name Bagger Vance is a distortion of the Hindu word for god.

In the story, Bagger Vance, the mystical caddie, helps Rannulph Junah, the World War I veteran, find his "authentic" golf swing.

But before he gets the help, Junah must agree to the match of his life: 36 holes on the [Links at Krewe Island](#) with two of the greatest golfers in modern times: Walter Hagen and Bobby Jones.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/WHO-IS-BAGGER-VANCE-Bagger-Vance-and-the-Bhagavad-Gita>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

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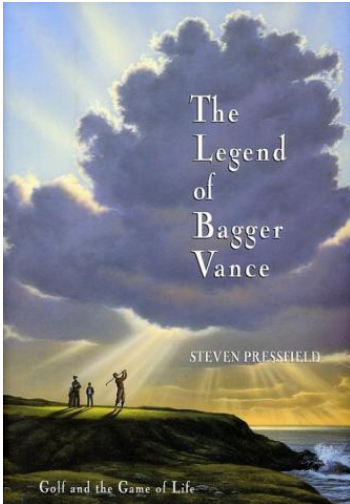
Will Smith as Bagger Vance

In this still-shot from the film, "The Legend of Bagger Vance," we see the mysterious (and mystical) caddie (Will Smith as Bagger Vance) and the golfer (Matt Damon as Rannulph Junuh). Bagger Vance is much more than a caddie trying to help a golfer improve his swing. His real mission is to help Rannulph Junuh improve the way he is living his life.

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The Legend of Bagger Vance - by Stephen Pressfield

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