**The Blind Men and the Elephant**  
By John Godfrey Saxe

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**Study Notes**

- **Define:**
  - Indostan: ________________________________________________
  - Inclined: ________________________________________________
  - Bawl: ___________________________________________________
  - Marvel: _________________________________________________
  - Grope: _________________________________________________
  - Scope: _________________________________________________

- **Interpret:**
  Why were these blind men all “in the wrong”? How far was each “in the right”?

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- **Examine:**
  Look at the individual elements of the poem. Give examples of the following:
  Repetition – when the same word(s) are used more than once in a line or poem

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  Simile – comparison using the words “like” or “as” (Hint: each blind man used a different simile for the elephant)

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- **Evaluate:**
  What may we learn from this poem?

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Study Notes

Define:
Indostan: obsolete name for the country of India
Inclined: having a mind for; tending
Bawl: cry or sob
Marvel: awesome sight; amazing thing
Grove: feeling around
Scope: range; span

Interpret:
Why were these blind men all "in the wrong"? How far was each "in the right"?

The blind men were wrong because they were each observing the elephant and making a judgement from a limited perspective, not taking in the whole of the creature. They were each right only in their observations of the individual parts of the elephant.

Examine:
Look at the individual elements of the poem. Give examples of the following:

Repetition – when the same word(s) are used more than once in a line or poem
Stanzas 2 through 7 each contain the words “Is very like a...” in the last line.

Simile –comparison using the words “like” or “as” (Hint: each blind man used a different simile for the elephant)
First man said elephant is “like a wall”. Fourth man said elephant is “like a tree”
Second man said elephant is “like a spear”. Fifth man said elephant is “like a fan”.
Third man said elephant is “like a snake”. Sixth man said elephant is “like a rope”.

Evaluate:
What may we learn from this poem?

It is not wise to take a stand on an issue before you look at it as a whole. Standing “stiff and strong” on an issue before having all the facts may leave you looking as foolish as the six blind men.

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