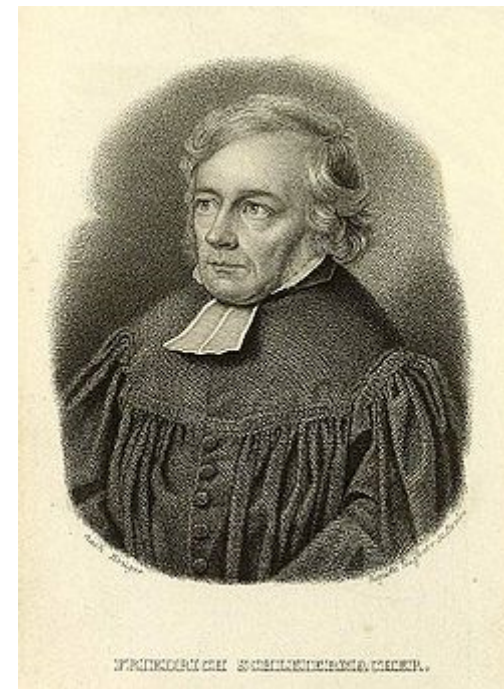
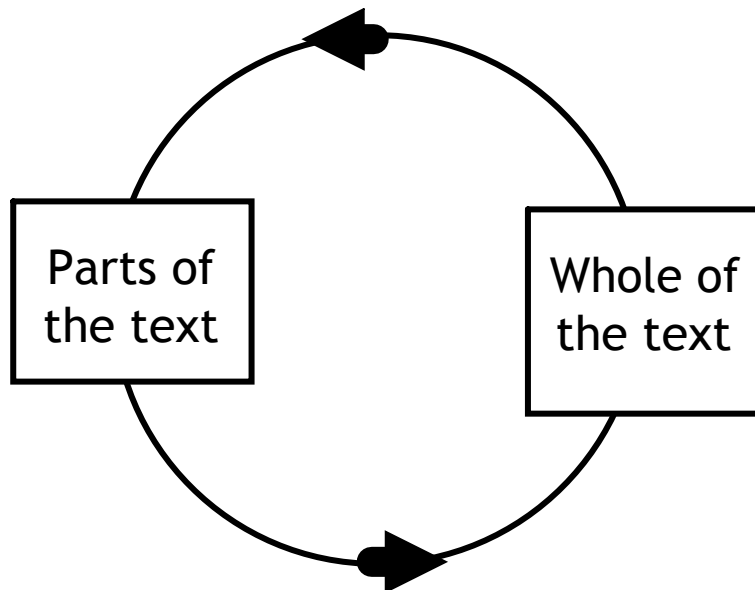


Freidrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834)

The Hermeneutical Circle

You cannot understand the whole of a text without understanding the individual parts, and you cannot understand the individual parts without understanding the whole.



"Hermeneutics is the art of avoiding misunderstanding"

Schleiermacher distinguished between:

- Psychological understandings of a text (working out what an author had going on in their head)
- Grammatical understandings of a text (what the words actually mean).

Paul Ricoeur - The Hermeneutic of Suspicion

Ricoeur noted that everyone has motives and intentions in writing things down. What people say they are trying to do is not always what they actually are trying to do.

Therefore, he says, we should adopt a "hermeneutic of suspicion".

The idea here is to look behind the text and to try and consider what might really be going on in the mind of the author.

Why should we take authors at their word? There is probably something else at stake and recognising this will help the interpreter to strip away the author's bias to get to the truth of the matter.

Don't we all do this when we read a newspaper?

