

Choice & Avoidance: towards a better translation for avoidance

Post by “Julia” of August 16, 2024 at 5:19 PM

According to the Cambridge Greek Lexicon, both αἵρεσις (haireisis) and φεύγω (pheugo) have a whole range of translations to modern English. After reading the dictionary entries of both words and the adjacent related words, both seemed to me as having three branches of meaning; to be clear: I made those branches of meaning up according to my personal mental structuring of the many possible translations.

In the case of haireisis, there appear to be three branches of meaning: political, military, and reign.

- The political branch ranges from choice in a vote to being a partisan.
- The military branch ranges from overcome all the way to destroy.
- The reign one ranges from figuratively a singer taking up a song or someone capturing another's mind (by choice, not by chance!) all the way to intellectual mastery of skills and physical capture and control of humans.

In the case of pheugo, there also appear to be three branches of meaning: political, physical, and social.

- The political branch ranges from slipping up in terms of what is (in)permissible to say to being driven into and living in exile.
- The physical branch ranges from fish causing other fish to flee to the escape of humans from immediate danger.
- The social one ranges from shrinking from shunning to the taking of refuge in a legal defence.

In addition, it seems like pretty much each of these meanings can be employed figuratively, which causes a little tree of meanings to grow from both words