

Choice & Avoidance: towards a better translation for avoidance

Post by “Don” of August 18, 2024 at 10:59 AM

One thing to keep in mind, from my perspective, in all this is that αἵρεσις (haireisis) and φεύγω (pheugo) are not necessarily meant to be opposites or antonyms of each other. They describe two different actions that can be taken in relation to desires and courses of action.

αἵρεσις gets at the conscious decision to "choose" a course of action oneself as opposed to flipping a coin or letting chance take its course. I think this is why it came to be used for "heresy" - the heretic had a chance to make the "right" choice and didn't

φεύγω gets at the urgency of jettisoning or getting away from or leaving behind, or "setting one free" if you will, from beliefs or ideas or desires that will, in the long run, be detrimental to one's eudaimonia and the living of a good life. The opposite semantic field in relation to φεύγω is to chase or pursue.