In this paper, I present the most significant results of the first part of my thesis, The Epistemology of Rhetoric, which was defended in Uppsala on March 1, 2019.

In this part of the thesis, I investigate the opposition between opinion (doxa) and true knowledge (epistēmē), which has been said to be at the very heart of the birth of rhetoric itself. I show through readings of Plato's dialogues, primarily the Gorgias, Phaedrus, and Republic that the contemporary rendering of this birth is, however, haunted by simplification and misrepresentation.

To put it simply, there is no explicit conflict between "doxa" and "episteme" in Gorgias as numerous textbooks and encyclopedias claim. I also show that when we look elsewhere in the Platonic oeuvre for that infamous conflict, we perhaps find it, but most of all, we find a more complicated and thus more interesting rendering of the epistemic tensions related to rhetoric.

I argue that locating and scrutinising the cracks in the rendering of Plato within rhetorical studies today provides avenues toward a contemporary epistemology of rhetoric, and thus to an alternative to the traditional way of reassessing rhetoric in the wake of Aristotle.