**ABSTRACT**

When the fictional character Forrest Gump said “Life is like a box of chocolates,” he offered an intriguing insight into at least one aspect of human existence. However, in creating his analogy he likely fell into a trap that sometimes ensnares social science researchers. For example, since the 1950s authors in disparate academic and professional genres have used metaphors/ analogies to better understand organizational culture and create imagery encapsulating its key components. However, this essay argues that this genre is not always associated with methodological rigor. Problems include: metaphors/analogies are often employed without associated rationale; and, authors define their object of analysis in overly broad ways and/or fail to specify an agenda. This article explores these limitations in their historical context and offers a strategy for remedying them, a strategy with implications for scholarly written communication. Identified problems and a proposed solution are somewhat generic and are therefore relevant wherever analogies are used.