

When the editor asked if I'd like to do a regular column I'm sure they had in mind that I would comment on the big political issues of the week. To be fair most of the time I do. However Autumn is here and that gives me the opportunity to use and abuse this column to confess my guilty pleasures because it is this time of the year that they all culminate into a perfect storm of indulgence.

Wikipedia describes a guilty pleasure as something one enjoys and considers pleasurable despite feeling guilt for enjoying it. The "guilt" involved is sometimes simply fear of others discovering one's lowbrow or otherwise embarrassing tastes.

Maybe readers think I should be spending my Saturday and Sunday nights reading highbrow political biographies or working through paperwork, and to be honest most of the year that might be the case. But come September the books stay on the shelf, the paperwork on the table and the phone is off the hook. The wine is poured. The heating is on. And I am in my PJs before small children have been put to bed. Why? Because Strictly Come Dancing, the X Factor and Downton Abbey are all back on our TV screens.

The broadcasters of such shows have its audiences nailed. They know how to push our buttons. They combine glitz and glamour with utter humiliation of the talentless. And yes I know I should be criticising them for the latter but I can't. There is a latent voyeurism in so many of us that is awakened during these shows. As for the brilliantly scripted Downton it draws us in to a different age with curious social complexities.

So forgive me for my confession to having such 'lowbrow' tastes. I feel better for it. But not as good as I will feel succumbing to the warmth from the glow of my trash TV!