Aesthetic

Aesthetic	Texts	Description	Example
Superhero	1	The aesthetic of superhero comics, a mix of sci-fi, heroism, myth, and speculative fiction	*Watchmen*
Western	2	Set in the US old west, ~1840-~1900; classically includes cowboys, whiskey, shootouts, high noon, etc.	*My Antonia*
Prison	3	Takes place within a prison or other confinement camp	*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*
Noir	3	Hard-boiled, early Hollywood, mid 50s/60s, mystery, detectives (includes neo-noir)	*LA Confidential*
Cyberpunk	3	Corporate dystopia, sci-fi meets social criticism, with an emphasis on crime and/or societal underbelly	*Ubik*
Meta	5	A mix of aesthetics, usually designed to confuse or experiment (or have no verifiable aesthetics at all)	*Pale Fire*
Surrealism	5	Uses elements of myth, more surreal than magical fiction, but less than fantasy; exists in a "dream-like" reality	*Waiting for Godot*
Napoleanic	6	Often focuses on life and aesthetics during Napoleanic wars (between Georgian and Victorian aesthetics)	*The Brothers Karamazov*
Reconstruction	6	Post US Civil War, typically found in American Lit., includes a pastoral American South, sometimes dark, with elements of gilded age	*Huckleberry Finn*
Southern Gothic	6	Gothic transgression, but substitutes American prewar South as infringing influence rather than European Classical Age	*As I Lay Dying*
Apocalyptic	8	An aesthetic just before, during, or after the catastrophic end of civilization	*The Road*
Fairy Tale	8	A myth aesthetic, but uses common tropes as touchstones found in morality tales in traditional cultural heritages	*Peer Gynt*
Sci-Fi	12	A world which is defined by humans' relationship to technology - making, using, creating, reacting to, and misusing	*The Martian Chronicles*
Nautical	12	An oceanic aesthetic; ships, pirates, whaling, exploration, sea monsters, etc.	*The Old Man and the Sea*
Fantasy	13	Fanciful aesthetic, including magic, fantastic creatures, ancient evil forces, etc.	*The Lord of the Rings*
Georgian	14	Very pastoral, a transition period between Elizabethan and Napoleanic (includes first American literature)	*Moll Flanders*
Pastoral	18	An aesthetic which extolls country life over urban, the "good old days," simplicity, hard work	*The Good Earth*
Elizabethan	21	Early European renaissance, includes Age of Enlightenment and Age of Exploration	*The Duchess of Malfi*
Ancient	23	Ultra low-tech, BC aesthetic, often infringes on mythic or magical, includes Classical, Bronze, and early iron ages	*Antigone*
Gothic	25	Ghosts, castles, hauntings, monsters, darkness, romance, the past disrupting and transgressing against the present	*Frankenstein*
Midcentury	25	A backdrop of the Cold War, use of basic modern technology, includes content about Vietnam, Korea, the Red Scare, etc.	*The Godfather*
Interwar	30	Era between WWI and WWII; includes the Great Depression, often utilizes a modernist, stream-of-consciousness writing style	*Scoop*
Modernism	32	Embracing of wealth and technology in the early 20th century, fruits of industrial revolution/gilded age, uses specific writing style	*The Waste Land*
Contemporary	33	The aesthetic of the modern era (~1980-present), most notable for its inclusion of computers without being speculative or sci-fi	*The Crying of Lot 49*
Myth	32	Fanciful, theological, invented, or legendary aesthetics	*Ramayana*
Victorian	50	During the reign of Victoria (19th century), characterized by post-industrial revolution urban areas alongside ultra-pastoral countryside	*The Hunchback of Notre Dame*