

THE FOREST IN MIKHAIL PRISHVIN'S *THE PANTRY OF THE SUN*: A CULTURAL AND ECOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract – The writer Mikhail Prishvin is known as “the singer of Russian nature”. Throughout his works, he expresses a profound love for nature. *The pantry of the sun* is one of Prishvin’s most prominent collections, which has been translated into Vietnamese. This article explores a recurring motif in Prishvin’s writing - the element of “forest” - by directly analyzing a collection of 20 short stories titled *The pantry of the sun*, composed in 1967 by Prishvin, a Russian writer renowned for his works on Russian landscapes and nature. The article employs ecocriticism to examine the forest motif, aiming to decipher the aesthetic messages embedded within the work and the close interrelationship among all living species on Earth, including humans. Additionally, it proposes a cultural approach to “Russian forests” to elucidate the identity of the Russian people.

Key words – Ecocriticism; Russian culture-geography; forest; Mikhail Prishvin; *the Pantry of the Sun*

1. Introduction

Ecocriticism - a critical trend that began to emerge in the 1970s with the core philosophy of “ecocentrism” aimed at transforming the prevailing “anthropocentrism” - has attracted increasing scholarly attention worldwide in recent years. With the goal of guiding humanity “back to nature,” many researchers have sought out ecological consciousness within the canon of world literature. Within this movement, numerous studies have evaluated the “ecocentric consciousness” in Russian literary works, particularly those of Mikhail Prishvin.

Mikhail Prishvin offers a unique and distinctive perspective on nature and the relationship between humans and the natural environment, making his works stand out in the context of twentieth-century Russian literature. In his time, K. Paustovsky remarked about Mikhail Prishvin: “Prishvin is one of the most unique writers. He is unlike anyone else, both in Russian literature and in world literature.” [1, p.1]. Perhaps it is because Prishvin’s prose consistently addresses the pressing issue of humanity’s relationship with the natural environment that the messages he conveys remain valuable and not yet fully interpreted to this day.

To date, there have been many studies on natural elements in Prishvin’s prose. In her dissertation “Nature in the diaries of M. M. Prishvin: 1905–1935”, M. P. Kachalova argues that Prishvin not only describes nature as a landscape or physical backdrop, but also weaves into it human emotions, philosophies, and perceptions, thereby creating a vibrant, profound natural world imbued with both personal and cultural significance. Kachalova analyzes three levels at which Prishvin represents nature in

his works: “1) the objective environment based on reality; 2) the subjective perception of the objective environment, reflecting reality, landscape, and nature as an independent phenomenon - philosophical, moral, and aesthetic; 3) a fully composed picture of the world” [2, p.101].

In her dissertation “The sense of nature in the works of M. M. Prishvin”, Taisiya Grinfeld-Zingurs offers important insights into Prishvin’s perception of nature. The scholar asserts that Prishvin “recreates the ‘eternal’ and the ‘fleeting’ in nature” [3, p.25]. In other words, Prishvin not only captures the perpetual (eternal) beauty of nature - such as the cycles of seasons, forests, mountains, and rivers - but also emphasizes transient moments, sudden and unrepeatable emotions that nature evokes in humans - experiences that are deeply personal and unique. From this, Prishvin calls upon artists to “learn to see nature through the eyes of a peasant”. This is a call from Prishvin to artists: One must approach nature with sincerity, simplicity, and a deep attachment, just as peasants do - those who live in harmony with nature every day. Thus, nature is no longer merely an object of objective description, but becomes an integral part of the writer’s inner life.

In Vietnam, research on Prishvin remains relatively limited. The study “Human and nature in the prose of Mikhail Prishvin” by Vu Thuong Linh focuses on the relationship between humans and nature in two of Prishvin’s representative works: *The pantry of the sun* (1945) and *Forest drop* (1943). The article analyzes how Prishvin expresses the deep bond between humans and nature, especially the image of the primeval forest, in order to highlight the ecological and humanistic messages in his prose: “Nature has placed its hopes and trust in humanity, and in return, humans respond to nature’s call for help, standing up to protect the weak and less fortunate animals. This may also be the empathy that forms the miraculous bond between humans and nature” [4, p.95]. The work “Nature in *Four seasons* by Mikhail Prishvin” by Nguyen Thi Tuyet Lan examines how Prishvin depicts nature, particularly the element of the forest, through each season - spring, summer, autumn, and winter - in the work *Four seasons* (1935), thereby clarifying his artistic philosophy and literary perspective: “Each season, the forest is beautiful in its own way, and especially, within these diverse beauties always lie simple yet profound things for people to perceive and explore” [5, p.25].

Overall, the aforementioned studies provide comprehensive analyses of natural elements in Mikhail Prishvin’s prose. However, an in-depth examination of the

element “forest” - a highly symbolic image in Prishvin’s natural world - remains relatively limited. This becomes even more urgent in today’s context, as issues of climate change and the relationship between humans and nature are increasingly pressing. Therefore, from the perspective of literary ecocriticism, this article investigates the element “forest” and the organic relationship between forest and humans, as surveyed through the work: *The pantry of the sun* by M. Prishvin, in order to further delve into new meanings of the forest world in Prishvin’s literature and to clarify his artistic philosophy.

The “forest” is an important component within the system of natural elements in Mikhail Prishvin’s prose, appearing throughout his works and containing profound messages about nature and the environment. Since ancient times, humans have been aware of the importance of forests. Forests are not merely the common home of all living species but also serve as cultural symbols, deeply imbued with national spirit. However, with the advancement of science and the emergence of industrial civilization, primeval forests have been eroded and destroyed, leading to the risk of ecological imbalance and threatening human survival. At such times, ecological movements that aim to bring humanity “back” to nature have garnered more attention than ever before. Within the scope of this article, based on an analysis of the short story collection *The pantry of the sun* by Mikhail Prishvin, the authors employ methods of analytical synthesis, comparative-contrastive, and comparative-historical research to explore the aesthetic messages conveyed through the element “forest”, examine the dialectical relationship between “forest” and humans, and elucidate the cultural significance and historical character of the Russian people as interwoven through this motif.

2. The forest – a primal and pristine space

With nearly 8 million square kilometers - covering almost 50% of its territory - Russia possesses the largest forested area in the world, dominated primarily by coniferous forests (Taiga). The vast Taiga forests, stretching over millions of square kilometers, are the quintessential landscape of the “land of birch trees”. The most distinctive feature of this forest type is its dense canopy, where rows of pine, spruce, and fir trees grow closely together, with the ground blanketed in moss. Interspersed among the conifers are notable broadleaf species such as birch and linden, along with various herbaceous plants, ferns, and especially mushrooms and certain temperate fruits like cranberries, creating a diverse flora. This richness provides ideal living conditions for large herbivores such as reindeer and elk, as well as small seed-eating rodents like squirrels and mice. The abundance of herbivores and rodents supports the development of large predators such as tigers, leopards, wolves, foxes, and bears. In summer, the Taiga forests are filled with birdsong, as over 300 species take advantage of the long summer days to forage. With its abundant resources, the Taiga provides food, clothing, and employment for Russian peasants. Beyond serving as a means of subsistence, the Taiga is also regarded as a wellspring of Russian culture. These majestic and mysterious forests serve as the backdrop for countless legends

and folktales, and are an endless source of inspiration for poetry (Pushkin, Yesenin, etc.) and painting (Ivan Shishkin, Isaac Ilyich Levitan, etc.). The vastness and depth of the Taiga seem to reflect the enigmatic soul of the Russian people - a mystery that is difficult to describe.

The forest ecosystem in *The pantry of the sun* by Mikhail Prishvin is brimming with vitality. The pine forests whisper in the wind, exuding the fresh scent of resin, while the groves of spruce and willow are fragrant with the aroma of wood. Amidst the conifers and broadleaf canopies are medicinal herbs, perennial plants, foxglove, and especially cranberries. Clusters of bright red cranberries hidden beneath pine and birch canopies, together with patches of mushrooms, create a diverse plant system. This rich flora offers an ideal habitat for deer, squirrels, mice, foxes, and especially for birds - most notably the lark, which the author frequently mentions. Unlike the mysterious and mystical forests of *Snow Country*, the enigmatic and dangerous rainforests of South America, or snow-laden forests filled with the struggle for survival, the forests in Mikhail Prishvin’s works are imbued with a fairy-tale quality. The forest in *The pantry of the sun* is a natural space closely connected to humans; on a psychological level, it is also a profound symbol of Russian culture.

First and foremost, the forest appears in the form of the homeland, the most primordial “cradle” for all development. For the writer, the forest is not only home to trees, flowers, birds, and animals, but also the source of human life: “Fish need water, birds need the sky, animals need forests and steppes and humans need a homeland” [1, p.9]. Most of the forests depicted in *The pantry of the sun* retain a wild, untouched quality, with little evidence of human exploitation. The life-giving source remains vibrant, pure, and primal. The people living in these ancient forests maintain a symbiotic lifestyle, relying on the forest for sustenance. The forest “nurtures” humans, and in turn, people cherish the pristine beauty of the ancient woods. Throughout the short stories, readers are immersed in the sound of rustling pines, the lush green vitality of birch forests, and the gentle fragrance of resin mingling with the fresh scent of herbs. All of this creates a wild, pristine forest space. People enter the forest as if stepping into a fairy-tale world, a world of spirits, leaving behind the clamor of axes and hammers. Confronted with the wild, unspoiled forest, humans cannot comprehend it through reason alone; they must feel it, listen to nature with their hearts, and perceive it with their most primal senses: “I must find in nature something I have never seen before, and perhaps no one else has ever seen in their lifetime” [1, p.8]; “...it’s just that even though we have eyes, we often do not see; though we have ears, we do not hear” [1, p.121].

The forest in *The pantry of the sun* by Mikhail Prishvin is portrayed as a living entity with its own emotions, yet it is not individualistic or selfish; rather, the forest simply shares everything it possesses. Within the forest’s personal “emotions” lies only the purest form of giving: the forest offers a sip of water to the dying, provides food, fur for warmth, fresh air, and even valuable treasures such as peat.

The forest embraces with the sincerest affection, constantly nurturing and teaching humans about a world beyond the grasp of modernity. Everyone is but a novice, always eager to learn from the greatest teacher in existence: "...I enter the forest as a pupil, and leave the forest as a teacher" [1, p.108].

3. The bond between the primeval forest and humans

3.1. Exploring the wild world of the forest

Humans and nature have coexisted, surviving and developing together for generations. The incursion of humans into the body of the forest is akin to a daring exploration of a mysterious world - a way to understand the workings of our planet. The story of Nastya and Mitya's journey into the blueberry - laden paradise - the "Palestine" in *The pantry of the sun* - is a testament to humanity's quest to discover life within the forest, providing answers to countless questions about the enigmatic realms that have always intrigued humans, about unnamed creatures, new fruits, or even mineral deposits hidden deep underground. Such explorations may give rise to new material civilizations, which is why people are constantly seeking information about the forest. The network of trails that appears throughout the story symbolizes the human footprint entering the primeval woods. Mikhail Prishvin communicates a message about humanity's journey - how humans have impacted their environment, how they have penetrated the ancient forest, and, conversely, how these trails have contributed to shaping local culture. Trails are often created by spontaneous human activity. To meet daily needs for food, people clear undergrowth and vegetation to forge paths. Conversely, some trails are not made by humans but by migrating animals or formed by natural phenomena. Trails typically carry positive connotations, always leading to good places; rarely do they lead to abysses or pitfalls. In *The pantry of the sun*, there are two such trails: one created by humans and one natural, both leading to the forest's treasures. Villagers usually follow familiar trails, exploring the forest but only daring to tread established paths. Thus, when the boy Mitya decides to take a new, unexplored path, it becomes a tense and adventurous situation, reflecting the human desire to conquer the unknown. A distinctive feature of Russian forest trails is the tassel grass growing along both sides - a piece of local knowledge. When Mitya is lost in the forest, recognizing this sign brings him relief: "But the main thing was that he saw, not far away on the other side of the clearing, the winding traces of tassel grass - the faithful companion of every trail... Why should I turn left toward the mounds, if there's already a path right in front of me?" [1, p.196]. Trails remain a steadfast guide for forest explorers.

Beyond the desire to satisfy curiosity about the wild and mysterious world, the human journey into the forest also stems from a more essential and primal need: survival. The forest nourishes people with its abundant gifts - resources that nature has silently preserved for thousands of years. Communities living on the forest's edge not only survive but are intimately bound to the old-growth forest through each harvest season, every hunting trip, and every path winding through the dense canopy. There, mothers and daughters enter the woods during blueberry season, following trails to gather ripe, red cranberries. Boys

accompany their fathers and grandfathers to hunt grouse, trap partridges, pick wild cabbages and medicinal herbs. They also collect fragrant pine resin - nature's "medicine" - to make warming oils and incense for the home. The ancient forest is a treasure trove, "the pantry of the sun with the great treasures of life" [1, p.9], the bright red cranberries gathered by Nastya and Mitya each spring, the foxglove, the fragrant pine resin beloved by little Zina (*Fox bread*). The forest is a living entity, sometimes with its own emotions, but these do not make it distant or selfish; the forest simply shares everything it has. By chance, those who enter the woods need not fear hunger or thirst, as the forest shelters Russians like a mother. It offers not only a sip of water to the dying but also food, fur for warmth, clean air, and, most importantly, a precious legacy - peat - that can nurture dozens or hundreds of generations to come.

The forest is not only a source of material sustenance, but also a space that uplifts the human spirit. Once deeply connected with the forest, people perceive it not merely through the lens of need, but also with their souls. Spiritually, the primeval forest is constructed as a living entity, at times a friend, a mother, or a teacher. Hunters rest against rugged pines, enjoying the breeze and the scent of resin. For children, nature is a fairy-tale world full of mysteries. They listen in wonder to adults' stories about the forest, nourishing their souls to always love and cherish the woods. In the story *Fox bread*, after each hunting trip, the father brings home gifts from the forest for his daughter, such as "pigeon's tear flowers", "hare cabbage leaves", and "fox bread" - actually spotted orchids, perennial leaves, and leftover black bread from his lunch. The forest breathes dreams into the hearts of children. Nastya and Mitya, in *The pantry of the sun*, believe in the world of abundant cranberries their father described, prompting Machia to seek the imagined "Palestine" - a blueberry paradise. For adults, nature offers lessons; after weathering life's storms, they find solace and advice in nature. Interestingly, comparing the lives of humans and other creatures reveals little difference. The forest imparts valuable lessons. *The pantry of the sun* contains many philosophies for forest-goers: no matter how clever people are, when they enter the deep woods, they become naive children. Thinking they know everything, they realize they know nothing. In the story, the hunter Antipych advises children not to wear boots or clothes when exploring the forest, without giving a reason, after hearing them boast about their supposed mastery of the woods. Years later, after experiencing life's hardships, they understand: unless one sheds their defenses and truly experiences hardship, one cannot grasp the essence of anything. They find the answer to Antipych's advice: "Don't wear boots or clothes" - because protective gear deceives the senses and perception; to understand something, one must devote their whole mind: "To be human, one must be thoughtful, weigh carefully, and probe deeply" [1, p.198] to discover the root of all things. Mitya, the boy in the story, is overconfident and ignores his sister's advice to take the old path, making a wrong decision and falling into The Bludov Marsh - a dangerous swamp. Yet, his courage is undeniable. Once a person decides to act, they do not fear failure, even if it is inevitable - as long as they do not repeat the same mistake.

3.2. *The primeval forest and humans - ecological empathy and the responsibility of conservation*

In Mikhail Prishvin's nature writings, nature is depicted as a living entity, endowed with consciousness and the ability to empathize with humans. Under Prishvin's nature-loving pen, the primeval forest can "listen" and "dialogue" with people. His characters are never separate from nature, nor do they approach it solely as spectators or conquerors; rather, they immerse themselves in nature, sensing the subtle vibrations of the ancient forest, streams, animals, and plants. Prishvin offers readers an experience of ecological empathy between humans and the forest: humans approach nature with intuition, respect, and love, while nature responds with generosity, protection, and, when harmed, with a wrath that can terrify.

Mikhail Prishvin was born in the rural village of Khrushevo. His early intimacy with nature became the foundation for his distinctive ecological consciousness as a writer. Especially the forest, which he personifies in its relationship with humans. In *The pantry of the sun*, Prishvin portrays the forest where **Nastya's** family lives not merely as a natural space, but as a living being with its own breath and emotions. The forest's breath is heard in the rustling leaves, the groans and cries of wild animals, which, as Prishvin describes, "are all striving to say together one common, single, and beautiful word!" [1, p.148]. This is a genuine attempt at communication between the forest and humans; the forest is "listening" to the movements of the two children - "intruders" in its domain. The forest gifts the children ripe cranberries, guides them to the Palestine, and "traps" Mitya at the edge of The Bludov Marsh: "The Whispering Pine Forest generously opened a broad path for the children, covered with lush, deep-green plants even in April" [1, p.146]. All of Prishvin's descriptions of the old-growth forest reveal the "soul" of nature, truly empathizing with humans. The relationship between the forest and humans is elevated; people turn awareness into action. For Prishvin's characters, the forest is not only an ecological landscape but also their homeland, something sacred: "to protect nature is to protect the homeland" [1, p.9]. They see the forest as part of their lives, exploiting it while also protecting it. Villagers care for starving crows in lean seasons, families along the river give abandoned wild duck eggs to domestic hens, hunters drive away foxes to protect larks that seek human help. There are also scoldings and interventions to stop workers from cutting down young willow trees, or prohibitions on keeping waterfowl along the Moscow River to avoid polluting the water. More profoundly, residents teach their children to love, cherish, and protect the ancient forest.

In Prishvin's works, nature and humans are so intertwined that the boundary between subject and object blurs. He assigns humans the role of "masters" of the forest, but not in the sense of dominion; rather, humans must respect and protect the forest. To protect the forest, one must first understand the life flowing in its veins: "Each of us is born a master of the forest, but we must learn much to understand the forest, to earn the right to use it and become its true master" [1, p.108]. In the stories *The Woodland Master* and *The dead tree*, the narrator uses the

playful stories of two children as a means of education, drawing them into the project of becoming "mischievous masters of the forest". The narrator takes Zinoska and Vaxia back to their rain shelter to listen to the pine's whispers to the rain. Through the tale of *The dead tree*, the narrator teaches the children to recognize the causes of nature's suffering, hoping they will leave the forest as teachers, passing on their knowledge to friends so they, too, will know how to love and protect nature. In *The old fungus*, the author recounts nearly dying of thirst in the forest, only to find an old fungus with a cap like a deep dish full of water. Instead of drinking immediately, he lets the animals drink first. As he says, one can only act responsibly toward the forest after understanding its inner workings and the symbiosis of its species. Rather than instinctively cutting the fungus and drinking, he lies beside it and sips the water, knowing that rain will refill the fungus and animals will come to drink daily, spreading spores for new fungi to grow. This is the endless continuation of life.

Mikhail Prishvin constructs the image of the primeval forest as a truly living entity. Through countless forest tales, it is evident that humans and the ancient forest share a close, balanced relationship: people regard the forest as their homeland, and protecting it is protecting the natural ecosystem, their own lives, and those of future generations. For them, nature is not to be "subjugated" but is the true master, and humans are privileged to use it - always with the responsibility to love and protect it.

4. *The forest – a museum of Russian cultural memory*

Mikhail Prishvin regards the forest as a museum of cultural memory. In *The pantry of the sun*, he consistently references the enduring beauty of Russian culture, intertwined with forest activities and the cultural memories of people connected to the woods. A museum is a concrete cultural institution and a vessel for (collective) memory. The forest preserves the values of Russian culture from ancient times. Throughout more than a thousand years of Russian history and culture, the forest has played an extremely important role. It has greatly influenced the Russian people, contributing to the formation of the Russian national character and their creative culture. The forest conceals swamps where fir trees, brought by the "wind-sown seeds", have grown in The Bludov Marsh, together with pine seeds, so that "from then until now, there are about 200 pines and firs growing together" [1, p.154], and the aspen forests, treasures of Russian resources. The Bludov Marsh is described as "the seabed of ancient times" [1, p.145], with hills "all sandy, covered with pines, called the pine forest" [1, p.145]. It is precisely in these swamps that many Russian folktales, closely tied to the forest, were born. The forest holds stories of the witch Baba Yaga from Slavic mythology, who lives on the forest's edge in a hut on chicken legs, surrounded by a fence of glowing skulls. Prishvin describes a scene in the forest, evoking a fearful anticipation: "Ahead, there will soon appear a clearing with the wooden house of witches and skulls hanging on the fence" [1, p.193]. Wooden houses frequently appear in *The pantry of the sun* as cultural markers. Russian architecture is closely linked to culture, with wooden houses typical of the Russian countryside. In the village near The Bludov Marsh, wooden

houses stand as symbols of Russian culture. Prishvin mentions “the five-cornered wooden house” [1, p.132] of the siblings Nastya and Mitya in *The pantry of the sun*. Wooden utensils are also part of daily life for the people living beside the forest. Even the house of the hunter Antipych and his hunting dog - Travka, “an old house” [1, p.171], after his death, “the wooden house became just a mound covered with flowers and grass” [1, p.171]. The forest is not only linked to the spiritual and cultural life of Russia, shaping cultural features such as wooden houses, but also to Russian food and daily activities for generations. Bread and the tradition of berry picking in the forest are both mentioned by Prishvin in *The pantry of the sun*. The Russian word for berry is Ягода (Yagoda). For centuries, Europeans have referred to red berries (cranberry) as the “Russian berry”. Cranberries appear frequently in the stories of *The pantry of the sun*. This fruit, deeply marked by Russian cultural identity, “grows in the swamps in summer but is only harvested at the end of autumn” [1, p.138]. Bread is a staple food during almost every hunting trip and the typical breakfast for people living in the forest.

The forest is not only a place that preserves culture - as a museum, it holds and revives the memory of people's culture. For the characters in *The pantry of the sun*, the forest is their homeland; protecting the forest is protecting their home. The forest, like the homeland, is not just a location but also a place that nurtures each person's memory and culture. Childhood memories - “waking up before dawn to set quail traps” [1, p.5] at sunrise and drinking tea with milk from their mother - are experiences only possible when living close to the forest, far from human-made civilization. All that has faded with time's erosion is recorded and preserved by the forest. Thus, people discover in nature “things they have never seen before, and perhaps no one has ever seen” [1, p.8] - traces of existence, the flow of years, and even human development. The forest hides the “Palestine” [1, p.142], where the cranberries grow - a place no one has ever reached. Forest trails lead people into the world of the forest - a vast museum of cultural memory. In his stories, Prishvin often uses the narrative of nature to talk about human memory. Or perhaps it is nature itself that revives those memories, as if we are visiting a museum and each memory flashes back, bringing the past to life in an instant. The story of young mushrooms sprouting in autumn, as birch trees begin to shed their yellow leaves, when the weather is warm, “the mushrooms push up from the moist, warm earth” [1, p.116]. And the old mushroom growing “among the green cranberries, a large red mushroom, the likes of which I had never seen before” [1, p.116]. Just as young mushrooms arise from moist, warm soil, young people are born into good circumstances, living in an environment little changed. Unlike the old mushrooms - those who, after a passionate and courageous youth during the Great Patriotic War, return and endure, becoming the old mushrooms. The forest witnesses the passage of time, the honoring or burying of the past, as the old mushroom expands, “holding water” [1, p.117] and becoming “the forest's water dish” [1, p.121], while the young mushrooms live innocently, sheltered by the forest. Not only does the forest preserve cultural memory, but in *The pantry of the sun*, it also nurtures the memories of two orphaned children in the

village near The Bludov Marsh - the memory of their mother who died of illness and their father who died in the Great Patriotic War. These are memories of their father's way of traveling the forest, using a compass, “wrapping the leg wraps tightly... stuffing his feet into boots, putting on the old cap...” [1, p.141]. The forest holds their father's stories about the cranberries in the Palestine - “red as blood, all cranberries” [1, p.142], about the Blind Swamp in the swamp - “where so many people and cattle have died” [1, p.153], about the fierce wolf - Grey Squire “who ate the livestock” [1, p.147] of the siblings. Or the springtime hare calls, which their father said sounded like “Good morning, Mother-Hare” [1, p.150], and the water buffalo's lowing. All the stories of the forest, from ancient times to the present, come alive as people step into the “forest museum.” The forest also records the journey of human exploration - when the first people crossed the swamp and paved the way for others to seek the Palestine. The forest recalls the pain and loss felt by the hunting dog when “the cries of the bound trees” [1, p.167] reminded it of the sorrow when the old hunter died during the Great Patriotic War. The forest witnesses birth and decay, life and death, of humans.

The forest in *The pantry of the sun* serves as a museum of Russian cultural memory - from the material and spiritual details of daily life to the collective memory of those whose lives are bound to the ancient woods. As a cultural museum, the forest not only preserves but also recalls the beauty of each person's culture. In the forest, people find things from the distant past that they never knew, as well as what they need to preserve from their own culture.

5. Conclusion

From ecological and cultural perspectives, the forest in *The pantry of the sun* by Mikhail Prishvin emerges as an object of respect, affection, and protective awareness. The “forest” is perceived as a primordial, pure, and vibrant space, imbued with a sense of mystery. The forest is both a means of livelihood and a companion - a nurturing mother and, at the same time, a teacher who guides people to become “masters of the green woods.” Additionally, Prishvin constructs the image of the forest as a museum of cultural memory, preserving the beautiful traditions of the Russian community. By learning to understand, love, appreciate, and protect the forest, people discover the cultural values passed down through generations, teaching them the fundamental truth: to love nature is to love one's homeland and country; to protect nature is to protect the homeland.

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